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Introducing Decorative and Fine Arts

This special issue on decorative and fine arts was conceived as a way to draw attention to these very rich, but not widely known, National Park Service collections. The general public as well as decorative and fine arts specialists are often surprised to learn that the Service has such extensive holdings.

One-half of the areas in the National Park System were established primarily for their historical values. The Service also administers 175 structures furnished with decorative arts. Its estimated historical collections fall somewhere within the range of 1 million items (excluding historical archeological items). Many, if not most, of these are decorative arts, with fine arts being a fraction of the total. Once the NPS National Catalog of Museum Objects is complete, Servicewide data on the actual size, scope, and nature of these decorative

and fine arts collections will be available.

Because of the site-orientation of its collections, the National Park Service has some of the most unique decorative and fine arts collections in the United States. Whereas many museum collections are acquired and displayed solely as examples of style, period, manufacturer, or artist, most National Park Service collections are assembled because of their site-associative value. Although they may provide information on style, and other such factors, they are viewed, more importantly, in context with other objects to interpret persons, events, a process, or a function (see discussion in this issue by Sarah Olson).

To describe site-associated objects, such as those in the homes of Harry S. Truman, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, or Carl Sandburg, merely as decorative

or fine arts, seems somehow inadequate. These objects are viewed not only for their decorative or esthetic value, but also for their contextual value. Whether the objects are original to the site, or whether they are period pieces similar to those originally used there, or whether they are simply well done reproductions, they are present because of their relevance to the site.

The National Park Service has developed considerable skill in assembling, interpreting, and managing collections of site-oriented decorative and fine arts objects. Those individuals who are experienced in planning, documenting, acquiring, preserving, displaying, interpreting and managing these unique collections share their points of view and their experiences in this issue. ©

Ann Hitchcock
Chief Curator

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"Ceres" panel for the
Vanderbilt House,
New York, 1881.

Our Visual Heritage: SHARING THE FINE ARTS AT SAINT-GAUDENS NATIONAL HISTORICAL SITE John Dryfhout

"Thank Heaven, we have at last some artistic work of permanent worth done for the government!" So said President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905 upon receiving his medal by sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907). This event comprised one of the highlights of a career in art

spanning more than thirty years. Saint Gaudens fused realism and idealism in his creation of major public monuments such as the Faragut and Sherman monuments in New York City; two heroic figures of Lincoln in Chicago; and the moving monument to Robert Shaw and the

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Plaster models for the ten
dollar gold piece and
one cent piece of 1907.



The Art Collections of The National Park Service—An Overview

Anthony M. Knapp

The Thomas Hill paintings at Yosemite National Park, the St. Gaudens sculptures at St. Gaudens National Historic Park, and the Charles Willson Peale portraits at Independence National Historic Park are well known examples of art collected by the National Park Service. Yet, while these and other examples are known, the exact size, scope, significance, and value of National Park Service art holdings remain unknown.

The definition of an art object seems rather simple at first. An object made for esthetic, rather than utilitarian purposes, it lends itself to a variety of view points. In his book, *Manual for Small Museums*, Lawrence Vail Coleman wrote "the arts are conceived by some to be architecture and graphic art, namely painting and drawing. To these major arts the term *fine* is commonly applied, as though works of fine art were superior to ceramics, metal work, carvings, tapestries and lace." As Mr. Coleman points out, the traditional categories of distinction are fine arts and decorative arts, the former including paintings, drawings, sculpture, and architecture, and often considered to be art created for its own sake. Art in this category is created primarily for esthetic purposes by persons academically trained in the field, while decorative art ornaments or embellishes an object created primarily for utilitarian purposes, i.e., ceramics, glass, furniture, metals, textiles, and books.

Sometimes there can be difficulty distinguishing between fine and decorative art. The chapel doors from the Russian Bishop's House at Sitka National Historic Park serve as one example. Created to provide a screen between the priests and the congregation, they had a primarily utilitarian function. However, paintings with religious themes were applied to the doors before they were transported to Sitka. Although the artist is unknown, the quality of the paintings emerges from the academic tradition. Thus, the doors are an example of both fine and decorative art. Jessie Pesch in his book, *The Art of the South*, places the question of distinc-

tion into proper perspective:

The borderline between art and artifact can sometimes be extremely narrow and arguably, in the eye of the beholder.

Both illuminate our understanding of the societies that produced them, and both are part of the larger heritage of our material culture.

In addition to fine and decorative arts, the category of folk arts and crafts requires definition. *A Bibliography on Historical Organization Practices, Documentation of Collections* edited by Frederick L. Rath, Jr. and Marilyn Rogers O'Connell defines this category as follows: "These objects were produced by artists and craftsmen without formal training who worked outside the academic tradition. They derived their techniques and subjects from experience and their works reflect the world in which they lived." Paintings, tombstones, scrimshaw, weather vanes, figureheads, decoys, tavern signs, quilts and coverlets, ceramics, and decorated furniture all fit into this category.

The National Park Service art collection includes fine, decorative, and folk art objects, but places more emphasis on the associative values of each rather than their esthetic qualities. The awesome splendor of Yosemite National Park attracted the attention of landscape painter Thomas Hill, whose work records 19th-century views of the park's landscape, lakes, waterfalls, and animal and plant life. The paintings, furniture, and decorative objects at Independence National Historic Park relate to the events and people which shaped this country's beginnings. In many of our historic houses, fine arts are used as decorative arts, which provide the fabric for interpreting to our park visitors an understanding and appreciation for the specific site and for our nation's heritage.

In 1976, the Smithsonian Institution published its *Directory to the Bicentennial Inventory of American Paint-*

Visual Heritage . . .
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54th Regiment of Black Volunteers in Boston. In this period of great portraiture, Augustus Saint-Gaudens created a series of sixty portraits in bas-relief; a haunting synthesis of Michaelangelo and Buddhism found in the Adams Memorial; tributes to beauty in the over-life size "Amor Caritas," a winged female figure with flowers in a sash at her waist and enwreathed in her hair; the golden "Diana" which turned in the wind 350 feet above street-level on New York's Madison Square Garden, lit by great



Adams Memorial, 1891, with this particular cast dating to 1968.

carbon arc search lights; and designs for the United States gold coinage of 1907, acclaimed as the most handsome ever minted in this country.

During his lifetime, Saint-Gaudens devoted himself to the creation of sculpture. He set new standards for the awarding of art commissions. His collaboration with other professionals in developing plans for the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition captured the imagination of the nation, and has its legacy in the great plan for the District of Columbia as well as some of the more than 2,200 statues, monuments, and memorials protected

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by the National Park Service. After his death, his home came to represent, in the words of his wife Augusta, "the best possible monument to the sculptor and a good thing for art in this land." Today, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is one of the few areas in the National Park System where the collections are so integral to its purpose and preservation that they are a primary reason for visiting the park. This infusion of the built environment, the careful manipulation of architecture, art and nature is what makes the combination of historical museum and park so attractive. Return visitors have the added attractions of the art exhibitions and concert programs, the nature walks and sculpture demonstrations which perpetuate the park as a "living memorial."

Sarah Olson in her recent essay, "Remembering Saint-Gaudens (CRM BULLETIN, February 1985), highlighted Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site as the first such property in the National Park System to commemorate a visual artist. Artists' homes and studios have been infrequently preserved. To name a few European examples, Antonio Canova's (1757-1832) country home and studio in Passagno, Italy was established by family and friends just after the great neo-classical sculptor's death. An endowment established in 1836 still produces income to care for the property. The Albert Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) museum in Copenhagen, established in 1848, differs in that it is royally donated property designed to provide display space for the sculptor's work. The Carl Milles Garden in Stockholm appears to combine the concept of the modern outdoor sculpture garden with the more traditional historic house museum. Established just after Milles' death in 1955, the collection also contains archaeological and classical artifacts reflecting the artist's interests and inspiration. In addition, contemporary sculptor, Henry Moore, displays ten of his larger works on the lawns and sheep pastures of his 16th century estate.

Public pleasure gardens and parks with sculpture have been established since ancient times. During the 16th century, sculpture in a garden setting was part of an allegory or theme. More romantic settings evolved in the 19th century. In the interceding years the great discoveries in horticulture

and arboreal specimens displaced sculpture as great treasures in parks and gardens. It was not until the 20th century that museum gardens for the display of works of art came into fashion.

The Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site at Cornish, New Hampshire, established by the sculptor's family and friends in 1919, is perhaps one of the earliest preservation projects of this kind in the country... a fusion of historic house museum and open-air museum. Capitalizing on the beginning of tourism, Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens opened the home and studios to the traveling public. Its main purposes were to exhibit a collection of originals and replicas of Saint-Gaudens' works; to aid, encourage, and assist in the education of young sculptors; and generally to encourage the art and appreciation of sculpture. A private foundation established by the original state charter continues to this day. The income from the endowment is used for purposes of the site, as well as a scholarship granted to a sculptor, the purchase of items for the collection, and selected educational or interpretive programs that maintain the "living memorials" character of the site.

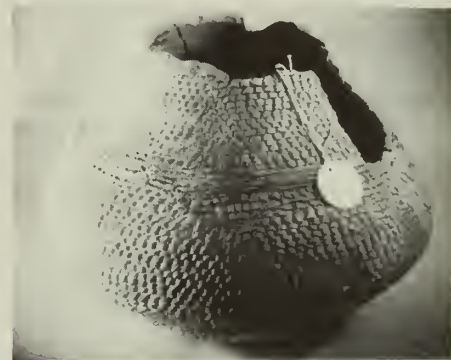
In 1962, the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments designated the property of significant value in the nation's cultural history. It also recommended its inclusion in the National Park System, which was accomplished by the 1964 authorizing legislation, followed by its establishment in 1977 as a historic site.

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is managed by a set of objectives: to foster public appreciation of the life of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, to establish the significance of the sculptor to the cultural heritage of the nation, and to present the relationship of the site to its setting and the Cornish art community. The 1964 authorizing legislation also provides an additional network: "In order that the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site may achieve more effectively its purposes as a living memorial, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to cooperate with the Saint-Gaudens Memorial"... in the presentation of exhibitions and events that are traditional to the site.

Ethnographic and Decorative Arts Conservation: A Comparison of Approaches

Gregory Byrne

Deteriorating objects in National Park Service museum collections need to be conserved, but how to accomplish this is often a complex question. The conservator can choose from numerous treatment avenues when faced with objects in need of conservation. But treatment selection is a process guided by factors that include the nature and needs of the material composing an object, the knowledge and skill level of the conservator, and hopefully, some understanding of the cultural values of an object that are most important. The significance, or values, of an object must be clearly understood if they are to be preserved. When preservation becomes conservation intervention, the laboratory treatment performed can and often does diminish some part of an object's value while enhancing another.



Anasazi vessel.

There are many value categories for objects in Park Service collections. Some of the more obvious include:

Monetary Value—the market value of collectable objects, which itself is based on a number of factors such as rarity and provenience, and is determined by appraisal, auction prices, etc.

Artistic or Aesthetic Value—the collected material as art object appreciated for its decorative appeal or as an example of artistic accomplishment.



Saint-Gaudens' sculpture collection numbers in excess of 5,000 pieces. About 100 works of bronze, marble, or plaster are on continuing exhibit. As a studio collection, many of these works are plaster, perhaps one of the most difficult media to conserve. Plaster is extremely porous and subject to staining from dust and dirt. Depending on its storage conditions, it readily absorbs moisture, and is subject to infestation from mold and erosion of detail. Poor storage conditions have resulted in serious losses over the years. As a result of some of these losses, the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, following the direction of its charter, began casting several works in bronze or recasting in plaster, not in any concerted effort to save every piece, but rather as a standby in case of a major loss. One of the most extensive recastings was the "Adams Memorial" located in a graveyard in Washington, D.C. The recasting of this work, fully documented in photography, produced an important interpretive tool. The plaster cast resulting from this process is known as a surmoulage cast and is 2% smaller than the original work in bronze. It was used to produce a bronze, which has been installed in the garden, replacing a disintegrated plaster cast of Saint-Gaudens' "Seated Lincoln" put there before 1926.

Items from the collection are increasingly requested for museum exhibitions. As a result of renewed interest and scholarship in this period, the number of objects on loan at any time in the year is such that a part-time registrar is needed to handle the extensive reports and paperwork that accompany such loans.

Despite the heavy workload involved, however, exhibitions build scholarly interest and understanding of the artifact, artist, or period. As such, they are a significant part of the interpretive program of the park. In many instances, they reach an audience far in excess of the park's annual visitation.

An unusual exhibition held in 1975 at the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, entitled "Metamorphoses in Nineteenth Century Sculpture," featured selections of Saint-Gaudens works, the bas-reliefs of Robert L. Stevenson, and editions of his ideal

sculpture, "Diana." The focus of the exhibition was the study of multiple editions—from the original image to its metamorphoses in bronze, plaster, marble and terra cotta, through enlargements and reductions, replicas and reproductions. The Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site gave access to a wealth of original material including plaster studies, molds actually used in casting, and documents such as account books and letters.

The park fulfills its objective to foster public appreciation of the sculptor not only through the exhibition and display of art, but also the interpretation of objects through books, catalogs, articles, film, video or lectures. Such presentations require significant research and development. Hours of research can sometimes result in a happy event. In 1978, it happened in a Madison Avenue gallery where I literally stumbled upon a lost panel from Saint-Gaudens' Vanderbilt commission, mislabeled "Viennese, 19th Century." Through the assistance of the Trustees of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial who purchased the panel from the dealer and donated it to the collection, we now have an early and unusual example of the sculptor's decorative work.

If imitation is a form of flattery, the Saint-Gaudens' staff have often been called upon by individuals and organizations needing assistance with the establishment of outdoor sculpture gardens or art park type programs. A recent issue of the *New York Times* carried a feature written by Noel Perrin, "Touring the Saint-Gaudens Sculpture Park" (July 24, 1983) which summarizes the exquisite balance of architecture, art, and nature in this unusual place:

Nearby, as you approach the indoor sculptor, is a circular gravel court with nothing in it but six white benches . . . and a single stone urn in the middle. . . you approach that court past two hemlocks pruned to just the shape of the urn in the middle. If I wanted to impress a Japanese visitor with American taste, that court is one of the first places I'd take him. ©

The author is the Superintendent and Curator of Saint-Gaudens Memorial Historic Site.

ings Executed Before 1914. The National Park Service, having participated in this project, received a copy of the index, that provided information on artists, mediums, subjects, and locations of paintings at that time, as well as recording 2,448 paintings. Interestingly, many of these in the National Park Service collection depict scenes and events connected with the westward expansion of America, and directly or indirectly related to the history of the national park movement. According to the 1976 inventory, Scotts Bluff National Monument has a collection of 88 watercolor paintings by William Henry Jackson (1843-1942), survey artist, illustrator, pioneer photographer, and author. At the age of 93, Jackson painted a series of watercolor scenes of the West for the Department of the Interior, many of which illustrated the book, *Westward America*, by Howard R. Driggs (1942). Paintings by Jackson are also located at Mesa Verde National Park, Grand Tetons National Park, Yosemite National Park, and Yellowstone National Park. The painting at Yellowstone National Park depicts the Hayden U.S. Geological Survey enroute.

In 1870, W. H. Jackson, in the company of survey artists Thomas Moran and William Holmes, travelled with the Washburn-Langford-Doane Expedition to the Yellowstone area. The photos taken by Jackson, the drawings by Holmes and the paintings by Moran did much to convince Congress to enact legislation creating Yellowstone National Park in 1872.

Recently, the Curatorial Services Branch, WASO, completed a survey to determine the numbers and types of ethnographic objects in the National Park Service museum collection (see "Tangible Evidence of Intangible Resources: Ethnographic Objects in the National Park Service," Debra Berke, in CRM BULLETIN, July 1984). A similar type of survey needs to be conducted for art objects. Since the 1976 Smithsonian inventory, new acquisitions of paintings have been made, including the significant collection associated with the NPS Maritime Museum in San Francisco. The NPS curatorial goal of achieving responsible levels of accountability

for all collections may help to accelerate the survey process. The revised Part II of the *NPS Museum Handbook* facilitates the recording of provenience, medium or materials, references, and clear descriptions and analyses of museum objects. Documentation of our collection is an important step to better understanding their potential uses and to making them available to researchers.

The art collections are an important part of the National Park Service museum collection resource. Their value to the public will dramatically increase as we inventory them, expand our knowledge through in-depth research, and enhance understanding through better exhibits, interpretation, publications and other media. More efforts like the publications, *Treasures of Independence*, edited by John C. Milley, and *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, by John H. Dryfhout need to be encouraged in order to stimulate scholarship and public interest in National Park Service museum collections. ©

The author is a staff curator with the Curatorial Services Branch, WASO.

Ethnographic . . .

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Associative Value—objects valued for their historic and cultural association with notable persons or events, for example, Lincoln's stove pipe hat.

Educational Value—(including interpretive value) an object in this category is distinguished by the degree to which it provides information about persons, places, events, or technology. Edison's light bulb has a great deal of educational value.

Research Value—objects can be the raw material for academic inquiry or stand as a reference collection. The "Harrington Series" for dating pipe stems is a standard reference based on materials at Colonial NHP.

Symbolic Value—established by virtue of an object's religious or cultural significance. Some objects acquire meaning beyond their usual functional role and come to carry a message, i.e., the Statue of Liberty which signifies American ideals, or the slave driver's whip expressing the cruelty of slavery.

Categorizing objects according to value is not clear-cut since most NPS-collected objects possess value in each category, and since every ascribed value is further affected by factors such as rarity and provenience or support data. What is important, however, is the attempt to clarify both the established and potential value of an object by the conservator and curator alike prior to initiating laboratory treatment. When we compare the conservation approaches to objects, it is important to recognize that object preservation cannot and does not exist unto itself. Just as objects exist in a context (perhaps as ethnographic or decorative arts pieces) so does their conservation. What may be quite appropriate treatment for a decorative arts object may be quite inappropriate for a similar object in an ethnographic context.

Let's look at stain removal as a treatment procedure and assume two ceramic vessels are both mildly stained by



Saint-Gaudens' vase.

organic materials. One vessel is from a collection of Anasazi materials at Mesa Verde, the other a vase, a furnishing from the noted sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens' home. Treatment intervention, in this case stain removal, is an irreversible treatment for both objects. It is, however, an acceptably appropriate treatment for the vase and can be viewed as enhancing this decorative art object's aesthetic appeal or value. The same treatment approach may be quite inappropriate for the Anasazi vessel since it could irretrievably remove evidence of use and diminish its research value in an ethnographic context.

It should be pointed out that treatment interventions (both materials and processes) are traditionally considered acceptable if they are compatible (not an agent of deterioration themselves) and reversible. The principle of reversibility is itself a child of both decorative and fine arts conservation, and, with time, has been applied to a wider range of preservation interest areas. The principle reflects the concerns of fine and decorative arts in that it usually refers to reversing a treatment process, such as delamination of the wax lining sometimes used for a painting, or resolubility, the ability at any time to put back into solution conservation materials such as adhesives, consolidants, and coatings.

Keep in mind that what makes a treatment approach acceptable (compatibility and reversibility) within the realm of decorative and fine arts conservation does not necessarily make it acceptable to all related conservation fields, the most notable exceptions being the fields of ethnographic and archeological conservation. The stain removal treatment is a good example, for cleaning is an irreversible treatment intervention. Removal of deposits, accretions, and stains can enhance the decorative arts object's aesthetic appeal of value, while cleaning can severely diminish the research value of an object in either an ethnographic or archeological context. Deposits on objects are so potentially important to ethnography that many conservators try to distinguish between accretions occurring before or after an object was collected. Similarly, old repair work is considered historic if performed during an object's utilitarian life. Historic repairs can provide a great deal of information and should be preserved in an ethnographic context. This is often not the case for a decorative arts object. The request to "redo" old repairs is one of the most commonly encountered treatment requests for the decorative arts conservator.

Other established intervention procedures such as some consolidation techniques for porous materials, and lubrication of skin products are only realistically "reversible" to a degree. Clearly the established treatment approaches used for dealing with the decorative arts are not appropriate for all cultural artifacts.

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The reasoning process used in determining treatment sometimes becomes a question of preservation of form vs. preservation of function. "Form" includes all the elements which distinguish a decorative arts object—design, surface finish and features, plus the object's overall shape or form. "Function" includes all the elements which provide information on process, evidence of use, and technological development. This categorical statement is oversimplified, for all who are familiar with museum objects are aware that these are not clear distinctions. For instance, many decorative arts objects are quite functional, and many ethnographic artifacts have a simply decorative function. What is useful in the form vs. function idea, however, is that it acknowledges an object's context, and makes apparent at a glance that the preservation of form does not necessarily mean the preservation of func-

tion. For example, Dr. Robert Heimann lists cleaning and conservation (reconstruction) among the factors which alter the original properties of ceramics and inhibit modern analytical assessment of ancient firing technology.

There are, after all, comparatively few conservators trained to deal with Park Service collections. Also, the conservation profession is divided in its approach to training objects conservators in the areas of ethnographic and decorative arts. Some objects conservators become materials specialists (ceramics, glass, metals, etc.) with a sharpened awareness of the different needs of ethnographic, historic, and decorative art collections. Others become subject specialists (ethnography, decorative arts, etc.) and treat a variety of materials within their specialty. By whichever course, most objects conservators develop areas of proficiency which include

both a field of study and a class of materials.

Yet, the National Institute for Conservation of Cultural Property points out that training opportunities for ethnographic and archeological conservators are minimal by comparison to training programs in decorative and fine arts. They see the need to prepare more ethnographic and archeological conservators as a critical one. With this in mind, it becomes particularly important for curators, collection managers, and conservators to develop more awareness with regard to the evaluation of objects. We need to remember that preservation exists in a context of value and significance, and that treatment intervention can enhance one and diminish another. Clear two-way communication between curator and conservator in regard to these matters is therefore of primary importance. ©

The author is Objects Conservator, Division of Conservation, Harpers Ferry Center.

Documenting the Historic Structure Katherine B. Menz

Documentation is important in the physical reconstruction of historic interiors, both as a primary guide to accurate portrayal of furnishings and a basis for developing historically accurate interpretation. Careful documentation provides the answers to four major questions: (1) the identification of specific furnishings that

belong at a site; (2) the appropriate location of those items within the site; (3) the appropriate approach to restoration and reproduction; and (4) the development of historical interpretive material. Researching these areas encompasses a wide range of source materials including photographs, drawings, prints, paintings, wills, in-

ventories, newspaper records, land and tax records, eyewitness accounts, and oral history.

Photographs are the most obvious documentation and also the easiest to use. However, they are often not available, and of course, can not be used for sites dating prior to the 1840s. Clara Barton National Historic Site



Red Cross office after restoration, showing Clara Barton's desk. (Photo courtesy of Bernie Shopper)

Clara Barton at her desk in the center office, circa 1900. (Photo courtesy of Library of Congress)



provides a good example of useful photographic documentation. Currently, only the original Red Cross offices have been completely restored. Diary entries, original bills, and surviving original furnishings supplemented historic photographs in the re-creation of the setting. Because of the thorough documentation available, an accurate portrayal of the nineteenth-century home/office was accomplished. Diary entries and original bills in combination with the photographs identified such typical nineteenth-century office furnishings as files, letter presses, and a graphophone. The written records indicated Miss Barton owned a Columbia graphophone, but the size and shape was identified only with the help of the historic photograph. In contrast, Clara Barton's sitting room has not yet been refurnished. It currently is filled with period furnishings bearing little relation to the original use and appearance of the room.

Sometimes historic photographs can be misleading. At the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, for example, what appeared to be an Imari plate displayed on a cupboard turned out to be, according to a sale inventory, a Crown Derby plate. Further research has shown that a family descendant has an entire set of this china, and it may have been part of a set the Roosevelts used at one of their other residences.

The identification of fabrics reveals the difficulties of working exclusively from historic photographs. A vinyl-covered chair with a history of having been purchased at one of the Roosevelt auctions was dismissed as an unlikely first floor furnishing. The available black-and-white historic photographs did not reveal fabric textures. After repeated examinations of the historic photographs, the chair finally was recognized as one used in the living room.

Other pictorial materials such as drawings, sketches, prints or paintings also provide documentation for furnishings. Contemporary drawings provide the major evidence for furnishing such sites as the Lincoln Home National Historic Site and the House Where Lincoln Died, Ford's Theater National Historic Site.

Nevertheless, documentation through drawings or sketches does have drawbacks. At the Lincoln Home in Springfield, three drawings of the first floor double parlors and sitting room made just before the Lincolns moved to

Washington serve as furnishings evidence. However, reproducing fabrics and floor coverings based on a sketch is difficult at best. Allowances also need to be made for artistic license. One eyewitness account mentions a center table in the rear parlor of the home; however, one does not appear in the drawing. It is likely that a table may normally have been in the parlor and removed for a special occasion. Center tables were a standard furnishing of this period, and it would have been unusual for the Lincolns not to have had one.

After photographs and drawings, inventories serve as the best source of furnishing documentation, particularly for sites predating 1850. Tax, insurance, and auction records often provide an accurate inventory of household goods. If the site is government-owned, information about the furnishings often is included with other government records. For example, United States lighthouse and life-saving station purchases, correspondence, and building specifications are filed under Treasury Department records and are largely intact at the National Archives.

At Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, the Sleeping Bear Point Life-Saving Station had only one interior photograph which showed a corner of the boathouse. However, found among the government records at the National Archives was the original list of the articles of outfit. This list was an exact accounting of the government supplies sent to Sleeping Bear Dunes when the station was opened. It covered all the equipment from paints to lengths of rope and the specialized life-saving equipment. Also available from the records was the list of boats sent to Sleeping Bear Point. However, a cross-check of the correspondence between Life-Saving Service officials revealed that the lifeboat scheduled for Sleeping Bear never arrived. Instead, several years later another surfboat was sent.

Documentation of the historic structure is at its best when a combination of source materials are used. At Scotty's Castle, historic photographs, drawings, original bills, letters, orders, and eyewitness accounts provide a remarkably accurate picture down to the smallest details.

Built and furnished in the 1920s by a Chicago millionaire, Scotty's Castle stands today with almost all of its original furnishings. Documentation at Scotty's Castle provides the curator

and interpreter with information ranging from preservation concerns to how and why specific pieces of furniture were chosen. Photographs and drawings give historic location information, an aspect often difficult to determine because, over time, family members and staff often rearrange furnishings. At the Castle, the original leather curtains have deteriorated from a combination of weathering and handling. They were also a problem during the historic occupancy of the Castle. Furthermore, a letter to the building superintendent concerning preservation of the original leather curtains describes the kind of leather and how it was treated. Experimentation with neat's-foot oil turned the sheepskin black, and therefore the designer, Alexander MacNeille, recommended a wax or paraffin oil to brighten them up.

Oral history documentation also provides an interesting view of the relationship between architect and client. The furnishings at Scotty's Castle are a combination of items custom-designed for the house and antiques selected by the architect/designer. The Johnsons, Albert and Bessie, selected many of the furnishings themselves, but ordering and locating them were up to Alexander MacNeilledge. Martin De Dubovay, one of the architects working for MacNeilledge's firm, was interviewed, and provided information ranging from who was responsible for certain designs to reminiscences about daily life at the Castle during construction. He recalled using books about Spanish and Italian Renaissance antiques to provide design ideas for the custom-made furniture.

If the historian pays careful attention to the details of documentation and the importance of relying not on one information source but on many, then the furnishings and interpretative materials for a site can be more meaningful for visitors. The furnishings in a historic structure provide the best—and sometimes the only—tangible insights into the lives and interests of the inhabitants. Personal taste, social standing and outside interests are reflected. The decorative arts serve as markers to help the modern visitor understand more thoroughly the quality of life not only of the people who used the structure but also of a period of history. ©

The author is Staff Curator, Historic Furnishings Division, Harpers Ferry Center.

How a Major Furnishing Acquisition Is Made Sarah Olson

One afternoon as several Harpers Ferry staff leafed through the latest Sotheby New York auction catalogue of American paintings, the words "Estate of Eleanor Roosevelt" leaped out from the page, not once but three times. Lots 92, 93, and 94 in the December 6, 1984 sale—oil paintings by noted Western artist William R. Leigh that belonged to Mrs. Roosevelt at the time of her death in 1962. Two had hung in her dining room, the other in a guest bedroom. Sold at auction in New York in 1964, they had dropped out of sight and were listed as "unlocated" in the furnishing plan prepared for Val-Kill by Katherine Menz, Division of Historic Furnishings, Harpers Ferry Center.

With the auction only ten days off, a frantic scramble ensued. The paintings were highly decorative and definitely site-related, therefore very desirable acquisitions. The artist and his subjects—southwestern Indian women—are highly collectible, therefore expensive; the pre-sale estimate for each was \$15,000-20,000. When neither park nor region could come up with the needed funds for the purchase of even one of the three paintings, a justification was submitted to the Manager, Harpers Ferry Center, resulting in a realignment of program funds for the Val-Kill project sufficient to proceed with the hoped-for acquisition.

On the day of the auction at Sotheby's plush New York establishment, Staff Curator Menz was at the auc-

tion, holding authorization to buy two of the three paintings—those that hung in the dining room at Val-Kill. Only one who has been a bidder at a high-stakes auction can fully appreciate the pressure felt as the big moment approaches when one's lot number comes up. When Kathy's moment came she had to decide quickly whether to go for broke on the first—and best—of the paintings or let the first go and take a chance on the second. Her decision was to go the limit on Lot 92. After several tense minutes of rapid-fire bidding, the gavel came down—and Leigh's "Neighbors" had been knocked down to the National Park Service. The successful outcome of the team effort here described enhances Val-Kill's authenticity as the restored setting for interpretation of a great lady's life. It also provides satisfying proof that government can on occasion move quickly toward good ends.

In a somewhat less dramatic fashion, another significant acquisition was made recently for Sangus Iron Works National Historic Site. The object in question is a large and rather elaborate signboard which hung outside the Ironmaster's House in the early years of this century. It serves as a vivid link to a man—Wallace Nutting—who played an important role in the revival of interest in antique furniture and historic building preservation. "Broadhearth," as he called the 17th-century ironmaster's house at Sangus, was only one of the "colonial chain"

of old houses Nutting "restored," not by today's standards, but with good intentions. Since Nutting was himself a figure of national importance, this site-related artifact, tying him to one of the site's primary resources, aroused great interest when offered for sale by a private owner in Texas.

Gifts, of course, are particularly welcome when they are relevant to the interpretive or research needs of a national park area. A very recent example of a strongly site-related donation involves several furnishing items from Carl Sandburg's "Connemara," given to Carl Sandburg National Historic Site by two of his daughters, Margaret and Janet Sandburg. Included in the gift are Margaret Sandburg's binoculars; her Peterson, *Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies*; Janet Sandburg's *Audubon Field Guide*; Mrs. Sandburg's Kodak Brownie Reflex camera; Carl Sandburg's "clip-on sunglasses, usually kept in the Front Office as handy if the day was very sunny;" several classical music albums belonging to Margaret Sandburg, for use on the piano in the front room; and several kitchen items, including the "Filtron coffee extractor with everything pertaining to the making." This donation was in direct response to the draft Historic Furnishings Report currently under review by members of the Sandburg family.

The author is Chief, Division of Historic Furnishings, Harpers Ferry Center.

Great Cover-Ups: Reproduction Carpet and Wallpaper for National Park Service Historic Interiors

John P. Brucksch

During the restoration of historic structures, the need often arises for appropriate carpet and wallpaper to properly interpret room settings. Because of the fragile nature of antique carpet and wallpaper, and because they are removed and replaced as they wear out, fade and discolor, examples of original pieces *in situ* are not common. Similarly, antique carpeting for sale in the antique markets is relatively uncommon, especially prior to about 1880, and antique wallpaper for sale is rare. The only option available, in most instances, is reproduction, based on the best available evidence of the original.

The reproduction process is undertaken when called for in an approved Historic Furnishings Report and supported by evidence cited in a Historic

Structures Report. Evidence to reproduce comes in many forms. Written records with descriptions or purchase records usually do not yield enough information to warrant reproduction. Photographs and other pictorial records are much better sources, and an actual sample, of course, is best. Only with an actual sample from the site can all the variables, including design, size, color, texture, and material, be determined with certainty.

The processes of reproducing historic wallpaper and carpet have many similarities, and in a few cases, one company can provide both services. The number of companies now producing reproduction carpet and wallpaper is rather small. Most firms won't provide custom design work and expensive setup of machinery to

produce the relatively small amounts required in a typical restoration. However, part of the incentive for companies willing to do smaller orders is that once the initial project is completed, the product may become part of the company's general line, with a label of authenticity that the carpet or wallpaper was used in a certain historic museum setting.

Arranging for the reproduction of carpet and wallpaper begins with the drawing up of specifications for the procurement process.

After a contract is awarded, the contractor is given all available original evidence, whether photographs, drawings, or a piece of the original, with which to work. A studio artist then draws up proposed designs in color for evaluation, and once approved, a trial sample is made for final approval. Only after a trial sample is approved can production of the entire order begin.

Two "danger spots" in the process of reproducing carpet and wallpaper occur in the initial decision-making stage when careful evaluation of the

original evidence is made, and in the design-work process. Before any work can begin, careful evaluation of the original evidence is necessary so that the reproduction carpet or wallpaper is not conjectural in nature. When parts of the original design are missing, such as key motifs, colors or full design repeats, the project should often times be halted. A stock reproduction carpet and wallpaper is preferable to a conjectural reproduction when major design elements are unknown and are therefore made up. The difference in cost, too, is a major consideration. For an average size room, stock reproduction wallpaper can cost between \$500 and \$700, whereas a wallpaper requiring design work can be \$5,000-\$7,000 per room, or more, depending on the number of colors and intricacy of design. For carpeting, the difference is also significant. Stock reproductions can cost about \$1,000 per room, while reproduction with design work can be \$4,000 or more per room.

During the design-work phase, careful attention should be paid to the design proposals sent for approval. Experience has shown that sometimes designers use "artistic license" in the recreation of design forms, and ignore certain elements in the original document, such as scale and design form. Many exchanges of design proposals between the contractor's design studio and the NPS representative are sometimes necessary to ensure that an accurate reproduction is made.

One of the most exciting documented wallpaper projects is that for the Russian Bishop's House in Sitka, Alaska. All the original wallpapers were found in place on the log walls over a base of burlap fabric. In each of the six rooms to be restored on the second floor, including the Bishop's residence and chapel area, the first layer of wallpaper dating to the 1843 construction of the building was recovered and is now being reproduced.

The original wallpaper, in various states of decay, will be carefully drawn and the design transposed onto a silk screen for each color in the design. Six wallpapers and four border papers are being reproduced for the project. Although most of the original 1843 wallpapers were made by wooden block printing methods, modern silk-screen processes will be used because of the enormous expense wooden block



Russian Bishop's House original wallpaper on burlap in the circa 1843 dining room.



Design for reproduction.

printing entails. A difference can be noted between historic wallpapers made from block printing techniques, and modern reproductions made from silk screens. Antique block printed papers have more paint build-up, creating a sense of depth not achieved with silk-screened papers.

One wallpaper representing the biggest challenge to the design artist is that for the dining room. For some reason, the first level of wallpaper in this room was largely removed before a second wallpaper was applied, making reproduction of the first wall-

paper difficult. Only small scraps of evidence could be found, the best having been hidden behind trim boards and moldings.

After careful analysis, the design artist reproduced fully the central wallpaper design, a bold Russian motif in gold and dark red that will surely dominate the room. Other papers being reproduced also present special problems for the design artist. For example, the border paper for the dining room is covered with a layer of whitewash which must be carefully removed to reveal the underlying design. Unfortunately, the 158-year-old colors tend to chip off entirely, taking the desired first level with the second.

The restoration of the Ironmaster's House at Hopewell Village, Pennsylvania, involved the reproduction of woven carpeting for the first floor hallway and dining room. Although no pieces of the original carpet survived, documentary evidence included numerous purchases from local weavers of cheap (10¢ a yard) woven carpet in the period 1820-1845. Most woven carpet of the period was made in a vertical striped pattern, commonly called Venetian. This pattern, typical of nineteenth-century Pennsylvania, was reproduced and laid wall-to-wall.

A possible upcoming project involving reproduction carpet is the two-room Collector's Private Office at the Custom House of Salem Maritime National Historic Site. A c. 1890 photograph of the rooms from the collections of the Essex Institute in Salem shows in detail a large geometric patterned Brussels carpet laid wall to wall with small scatter rugs in the doorways. This pictorial evidence supports the written documents which record the purchase on November 12, 1873, of 194 1/3 yards of Brussels carpet for the Custom House, and an April 6, 1887, purchase of 4 Smyra (oriental) rugs, at a cost of \$16.80, probably added to hide carpet wear that normally occurs around doorways. A sample of the original carpet survives at the Custom House. Although at today's prices, reproducing such floor coverings will not be as inexpensive as it was in 1873, it still adds that touch of authenticity which makes any visit to a historic home genuinely convincing. ©

The author is Staff Curator with the Historic Furnishings Division, Harpers Ferry Center.

THE HISTORIC FURNISHINGS PROGRAM

Interpretively, our furnishings exhibits fall into three categories. First are those that interpret people. Exhibits at biographical sites fit their subject like a suit of clothes, providing a three-dimensional material blueprint of a life or lives. Domestic interiors like Carl Sandburg's and Augustus Saint-Gaudens' are exemplary. These exhibits lead the visitor straight to the personalities that occupied the homes.

Second are the sites interpreting historical events. A more difficult interpretive vehicle than the biographical exhibit, perhaps because objects used by men and women seem more tangible than those shaped by events, the event site has generally been the earliest recognized in the history of the historic house movement. Immediately following the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, the senior officers and aides-de-camp surrounding Lee and Grant removed as souvenirs almost every object present in the room. Their actions identified the significance of the setting to preserving the event for history, and, by preserving the objects, furthermore enabled the accurate re-creation of the McClean parlor.

Third are those exhibits interpreting processes. While sometimes imbued with a strong biographical element, like the overriding presence of Clara Barton in the Red Cross Offices, this category is more typically represented by sites like the U.S. Custom House at Salem Maritime National Historic Site or the Sleeping Bear Point Life-

Saving Station where the tools required to perform a job interpret a process or function. Because these exhibits are comprised almost exclusively of useful objects, it is relatively easy to extend oneself into the process.

From the cultural resource management standpoint, our furnished museums fall into two classes—those in which the objects are largely original to the site and those encompassing largely "exotics," or non-site specific objects. Site specific collections like those at Saint-Gaudens, Carl Sandburg, Scotty's Castle and several of the president's homes come to mind. These types of furnishings are part of the resource and should be treated as such. Their value as a site-associated group of related objects may far outweigh the intrinsic value of any single object in the collection. The historical integrity of such a collection is certainly equal to and in some cases may exceed that of the historic structure that houses it.

When all or part of an original collection is missing, or unavailable, the substitution of non-site specific objects based on firm documentation enables quality interpretation of a furnished structure. But the acquisition and installation of objects based on little to no documentation is sure to compromise a park's interpretive program and the historical integrity of a structure.

The Division of Historic Furnishings at the Harpers Ferry Center is responsible for planning and production of furnished structures throughout the Service. Our program during

fiscal years 1984 and 1985 includes work at some 20 sites. The majority are biographical sites, but the program is showing increasing numbers of process sites. Many are twentieth-century; most are well documented; and more than half include collections largely original to the site. The current furnishings program may be one indicator of increasing emphasis placed in the Service on collections, as well as on recent history and technological and manufacturing history.

For the future, I am personally working to develop mechanisms (computers, no doubt) by which we can formulate more precise statistical data on all our furnished structures. *Exactly* how many do we have from one year to the next? How many have site-specific collections, and what is the scope of each of those collections? How many have approved furnishings plans, and what is the level of documentation represented in those reports? To what degree have those plans been implemented? And, finally, what do our furnishings exhibits interpret, and what relationship do those stories bear to the overall park interpretation? Formulating such information on a model perhaps similar to the List of Classified Structures should enable program managers not only to set priorities for furnishings work more easily, but to achieve priorities that clearly and consistently reflect Service policies for interpretation and cultural resources management.

Sarah M. Olson
Chief, Division of Historic
Furnishings

KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Among the most evocative interior photographs associated with a Park Service site are those of the J. Bernard Moore House at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Skagway, Alaska. The Historic Furnishings Division recently distributed for review the Moore House Furnishings Report, recommending limited re-creation of the interiors shown in the photographs.

Moore family history is synonymous with the history of Skagway during the gold rush. J. Bernard assisted his father,

Southwest corner of the Moore House parlor, Skagway, circa 1904. (Photo courtesy of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks)



Captain William Moore, in blazing the White Pass Trail to the Klondike, and building Moore's wharf to make Skagway accessible to gold rush traffic from Seattle. Father and son were largely responsible for routing the stampede through Skagway, and thus creating the *raison d'être* for the town.

Three circa 1904 interior views survive in Ben Moore's Skagway photo album housed in the Moore Collection at the University of Alaska. These photos document the northeast and northwest corners of the parlor, and the north side of Moore's bedroom. Three additional interior views were removed from the album prior to its accession into the University archives. The missing views, identified in the album by captions, showed a third corner of the parlor, two views of the adjacent dining room, and the maid's room located upstairs.

Photos show that the Moores were fully in step with contemporary trends in interior decoration, featuring what can safely be termed for the period as highly evolved (many would say over evolved), eclectic decoration characterized by little to no unadorned wall space. In fact, few turn-of-the-century photographs of American interiors rival these in numbers of wall ornaments per square foot. The Moore's wall decorations were primarily Alaska flora and fauna, souvenir items, and family photographs. Many of the photographs seen hanging in the 1904 house survive in the Moore Collection at the University of Alaska.

Because these rooms were absolutely unique in 1904, marked by the abundant, and nonschematic, arrangement of objects that held special meaning for the Moores, speculating about the appearance of the undocumented corners is sure to produce an inaccurate picture. Furthermore, re-creating the entire parlor will severely limit visitor access.

Based on these conditions, re-creating 1904 appearance in only two corners of the house has been recommended. The remaining floor area may be supplemented with exhibits on the Moore family and their influence on Skagway's history. ©



Cavalry barracks, Fort Robinson, Nebraska, 1891-1895.

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF ENLISTED MEN'S BARRACKS

In January 1985, the Division of Historic Furnishings distributed "A Pictorial History of Enlisted Men's Barracks of the U.S. Army, 1861-1895." The author, William L. Brown III, has a long-standing interest in the material culture of the American military. In this collection of some 75 images, Brown illustrates striking similarities among army posts, while pointing out the differences, sometimes subtle but always present, that distinguish one post from the next. Differences appear in unique interpretations of standard army forms to suit particular regional climates, or in the presence of highly personal paraphernalia in an otherwise standardized interior. The study also points out that, as far as the Quartermaster Corps was concerned, one nineteenth-century soldier was equal to the next, whether black, white, or Indian.

Brown continues to compile pre-1900 images of military interiors and the Division of Historic Furnishings now maintains a substantial file of interior views showing officers' quarters, mess halls, and canteens, as well as offices, supply rooms, and tent interiors. The Division welcomes additions to this collection and plans to prepare further pictorial volumes. Specific plans include distributing views of officers' quarters in a format similar to the Barracks History. Unlike enlisted men's barracks, however, images of officers' quarters show highly individualized interiors bearing little evidence of standardization.

The pictorial barracks history is a companion to an equally comprehensive two-volume study encompassing the written records of barracks interiors that is scheduled for distribution later in the year. ©

FURNISHING THE FARAWAY

Tucked inconspicuously between the low hills that flank Bonita Canyon, entrance to Chiricahua National Monument, sits Faraway Ranch, owned and operated by two generations of the pioneer Erickson family for almost 90 years (1888-1977). Though cattle-raising was an important part of the ranch operation, Faraway's distinctive character stems from its role as a "guest ranch" for over 50 years, the starting place for many early horseback trips into Chiricahua's "Wonderland of Rocks." Chiricahua National Monument, in fact, owes its existence mainly to the promotional activities of Ed

Riggs and his wife, the former Lillian Erickson, who jointly operated the ranch from 1923 to 1950. The ranch was purchased and incorporated into the Monument in 1979, partly to ensure sympathetic use of this property at the entrance to Chiricahua, partly to commemorate the pioneer families who settled there in the 1880s and brought the Monument into the National Park System.

The main house is a stuccoed adobe structure of about 15 rooms, dating mostly from 1915, but incorporating earlier construction from the late 1880s and 1890s. Its furnishings include several

pieces constructed by Neil Erickson, the original owner/builder, a native of Sweden, along with an interesting mixture of late 19th- to mid-20th-century store-bought furniture, heating and cooking stoves, and household accessories.

The Historic Furnishings Report now in preparation at the Harpers Ferry Center is designed to document how each room in the main ranch house was used and furnished over the years (1888-1977) and recommends a furnishing plan for each of the rooms scheduled for public viewing, with the focus on the post-1950 period for

continued on page 12

which the evidence is strongest and the extent furnishings most complete. Besides diaries, letters and other documents, documentation includes a number of interior photographs and interviews with family members, former employees and guests who recall the ranch as it was from the 1920s to the end of Mrs. Riggs' life in 1977.

When refurnished, the Faraway Ranch house will provide a setting within which life on the ranch—as a resident, as an

employee, as a guest—can be interpreted to park visitors. Hopefully, visitors will come away with some appreciation of Lillian Riggs' own feeling for the house, as expressed in her dairy in January 1954:

The only sure thing is that I love my home and there is a feeling of safety and security in the very walls and in the length and breadth of the spacious rooms. . . . Death will be far preferable to giving up my Faraway home. ©

BEWITCHING INTERIORS AT THE SALEM CUSTOM HOUSE

A Historic Furnishings Report is underway for the Custom House at Salem Maritime National Historic Site. The majestic Federal brick structure was the center of U.S. Treasury Department Custom operations for the Salem-Beverly district from its construction in 1819 until its purchase by the National Park Service in 1937. The port of Salem, with the Salem Custom House as its focal point, played a prominent role in the mercantile and maritime history of the United States in the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth century.

Two important historical figures associated with the Custom House are Nathaniel Hawthorne and General James Miller. Hawthorne, one of America's great nineteenth-century authors, was port surveyor during 1846-1849; and Miller, a hero in the War of 1812, was port collector from 1825 to 1849.

The Surveyor's Office on the first floor has always been associated with Hawthorne. In *The Scarlet Letter* (1850),

Hawthorne described the Custom House building, his office, and the staff in detail, and the work forms an important basis for refurnishings. As early as the 1890s, curiosity seekers visited the Salem Custom House in numbers to see the office where Hawthorne worked.

A great deal of original Custom House furniture survives in the building, most dating from the extensive renovations of 1873, 1886-1887, and 1904. Records of the U.S. Treasury Department at the National Archives yielded a wealth of information regarding furnishings and room use.

Although total refurnishing for the Custom House is unlikely, the furnishing plan will consolidate all evidence found to date and will firm up the evidence for two rooms already furnished, the c. 1846 Hawthorne surveyor's office, and the c. 1904 main business office, both on the first floor. On the second floor, good evidence was found for the two collector's private offices, c. 1890, and refurnishing will likely be recommended there. ©

219 North Delaware: Caring for a Furnished Historic Home

Steven Harrison

Harry and Bess Truman led a quiet and very private life at 219 North Delaware Street in Independence, Missouri. Unpretentious people, they rarely entertained visitors, and consequently had little need to use their home as a show place. Most of the wallpaper, paint, carpets, and draperies date from the 1950s following the Trumans' move back to Independence from Washington, D.C. Furnishings have come from all the generations of Mrs. Truman's family who have lived there: a pillar mirror with Mrs. Truman's great-grandfather's name written on the back; Mrs. Truman's grandfather's books; silver epergne given to Mrs. Truman's parents as a wedding gift in 1883; Mr. Truman's suits, still in the bags from the cleaners, hanging in his closet; toys of the Trumans' daughter, Margaret, piled in a crib in the attic; toys of the Trumans' grandsons in the corner of an upstairs guest room.

The Trumans' lifestyle, taste, and values seemed to preclude any purposeful collection of "fine and decorative arts" for their home. They simply kept things they liked and items that had special meaning. Although the home does not contain the

CURATOR'S DREAM: AN EMERGENCY ACQUISITION FUND

If asked, few museum directors and curators would say that they have sufficient funds to purchase new acquisitions. Especially in the areas of decorative and fine arts, auction prices frequently rise out of range of most museums and historical organizations. All have experienced the intense frustration of failing to acquire an important piece for their collections because of funding limitations. National Park Service curators and superintendents are no exceptions to this plight, although they have also enjoyed some notable successes (see article on furnishing acquisition in this issue).

One of the most poignant tales of a missed opportunity comes from Martin Van Buren National Historic Site. A unique mahogany dining table, documented as being used by Martin Van Buren at Lindenwald, his home in Kinderhook, New York, was loaned to the site for display in September 1982. In October 1983, however, the owner decided to sell the table, after being notified by the park that it would have to be stored elsewhere while the house was being restored. The table, believed to be a Duncan Phyfe, has an accordion-style understructure considered unusual for an

American piece of the Federal period. It was expected to bring \$80,000 to \$120,000 at the auction, to be held in January 1984 at Christie's.

The site staff and The Friends of Lindenwald sought funding from offices in the National Park Service, as well as from individuals, corporations, and numerous foundations. The Historic Furnishings Branch, Harpers Ferry Center, indicated that it might be able to contribute \$20,000; other offices and outside organizations made tentative promises of an additional \$5,000 to \$8,000, but the total fell far short of the estimated value.

At the auction, bidding on the table started at \$40,000 and quickly rose to \$170,000. It was purchased by a private collector for use in his home in the Hudson Valley. This unfortunate loss for Martin Van Buren National Historic Site prompted Associate Director Jerry Rogers and Chief Curator Ann Hitchcock to explore options for establishing an emergency acquisition fund.

As conceived, the fund would be solely for the purchase of highly significant objects original to a site. It would be reserved for large purchases that greatly exceed a park's ability to reprogram ap-

propriated funds or raise donated funds in the allotted time. Of the many ideas discussed, the most appealing, so far, seems to be that of a revolving fund established in association with a private foundation, society, or trust.

Funds would be donated to the foundation, for the emergency purchase of objects for National Park Service sites. Once a purchase had been made, the object would be loaned to the site, and the National Park Service could then program or obtain donated funds to purchase the object from the foundation at the earliest possible date. Thus, the fund would be replenished for future emergencies. In order to insure constant availability, a minimum of \$600,000 is the estimated requirement for the revolving amount.

At present, an emergency acquisition fund is still a curator's dream. But the search is underway for an organization interested in cooperating with the National Park Service to establish and operate such a fund. Comments and suggestions on this concept are welcomed and may be sent to the Chief Curator, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.



Truman dining room looking toward the study. Visitor carpeting provides an obvious path for tours.

finest examples of furniture, the principal that governs its care remains its preservation, unimpaired for future generations.

Since the National Park Service officially assumed responsibility for the home on December 8, 1982, the staff has developed innovative and non-obtrusive security and preservation techniques to protect it. Consequently, we have managed it as a museum, while still allowing visitors to experience it as a home.

As is true with most historic homes, interpretive use influences curatorial care. The Truman Home was not designed or built for public tours. Among the first NPS personnel to visit the home was Andy Ketterson, Chief, Cultural Resources Management, Midwest Region. He realized the imperative of having limited guided tours rather than using other interpretive methods such as a fixed station. In order to protect the structure, its contents, and the public's intimate experience, eight visitors represent the maximum number permitted to tour the home at any one time. On tours with more than four visitors, an interpreter follows as a "trailer" to help keep the group together and watch for touching. This provides a low-key but labor intensive part of our solution to the security and preservation problems at the Truman Home.

The interpretive staff makes every effort, both before and during a tour, to minimize touching. The touching that does occur involves inadvertent contact with the structure, such as leaning on woodwork and walls, rather than intentional touching out of curiosity or an intent to steal. The staff keeps complete statistics which

help direct curatorial attention to problem areas before visible deterioration develops. For example, the woodwork and furnishings that receive the most touching are regularly waxed.

John Hunter, Staff Curator, Midwest Region, has worked with the home in developing a preliminary security system. Because of time and funding constraints, a complete security and fire system was not installed in 1984. However, one is scheduled for this year. In the meantime, some simple but effective security measures have served as a back-up. Small, vulnerable objects have been secured with microcrystalline wax. A very small amount acts as an adhesive. It offers resistance if someone attempts to remove an object, but does not stick so well that objects break if pulled. Several metal pitchers and teapots along the tour route also have had their bases filled with marbles.

The added weight offers some resistance to movement, and the sound of clanking marbles alerts visitors and staff to possible theft. The dining room table, set for a formal dinner, has open-weave placemats but no tablecloth. To secure the silverware, Museum Aid Lisa Bosso backed the placemats with organza. She then stitched the silver to the mat or napkin with transparent nylon thread.

In addition, all the cupboards, drawers, and cabinets contain artifacts. To provide security along the tour route without permanent or destructive closures, we installed door annunciators (Caddi Model CDC-100G) as mini-alarms. Costing about \$20.00 each and powered by a 9-volt battery, these small, lightweight alarms are held in place by gravity or microcrystalline wax.

The park did not install physical barriers in the home. To help control visitors and alert staff when someone strays from the tour route, the staff uses pressure pads under the wall-to-wall carpeting. They have local battery-powered door chimes to gently warn visitors and alert the interpretive staff to handle the situation personally. This effective, non-destructive security method does not disrupt the bulk of visitors who follow the rules presented at the beginning of each tour. In addition, the staff has not noticed any attempted theft from the home, nor any successful theft.

Sarah Olsen, Chief, Branch of Historic Furnishings, Harpers Ferry Center, also worked with the Truman Home staff to devise a method to protect historic floor coverings with visitor-use carpeting.

Even with a maximum of eight visitors per tour, the home still has to establish limits. Rather than rely on traditional physical barriers, the staff developed psychological ones. They installed dark gray visitor-use carpeting which subtly but clearly set access limits for visitors. In foyer and dining room, they removed and preserved the historic carpeting, then replaced it with new carpeting, some the distinctive dark gray and the remainder a color and texture to match the historic carpeting. In the foyer which remains almost entirely available to visitors, they included a six-inch border of historic colored carpeting to set the stage for the remainder of the tour. In the dining room, the dark gray path narrows to skirt the table and chairs in the center. Then off the dining room, a small extension of the visitor-use carpeting permits entry into the intimate study, the Trumans' retreat. The gray visitor path continues over linoleum in the kitchen and painted wood on the back porch, thus protecting historic floor coverings and providing barriers by the installation of this particular design of visitor-use carpeting.

At 219 North Delaware, the staff has developed some solutions to the often lamented conflict between preservation and use. After guiding more than 61,000 visitors on tours, our experiments and efforts have helped us meet our obligations to the preservation of cultural resources. ©

The author is Chief, Division of Cultural Resources, at the Truman Home.

Historic Archeology and the Decorative Arts

Brooke Blades
David Orr
Douglas Campana

Archeological study of decorative arts is certainly not unique to the American historical period. The desire to recover datable and possibly esthetically pleasing objects has motivated excavations of Egyptian tombs, Roman villas, and American Southwestern pueblos. Many of the earliest projects at American historical sites were charged with the dual responsibilities of defining the architectural appearance of a given structure, and of recovering objects used by the historic inhabitants. The potential of excavated materials to excite the public is undeniable. Archeologists and curators also realize that since the artifacts are documents of cultural activity, the mutually beneficial alliance between archeology and the decorative arts can do much more than fill museum display cases and storage cabinets.

The lifespan of an object can be generalized as follows: manufacture; transportation to place of use (which may be a few feet or two continents apart); actual use; and eventual disposition. A comprehensive analysis of the behavior patterns brought to North America by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European societies requires that all of these aspects be understood or at least examined.

Let us consider the cultural environment illustrated by Jan Steen's 1663 genre painting of a riotous Dutch household entitled, "Beware of Luxury." Symbolic conceits embodied in the mallard duck and monkey notwithstanding, the scene captures the spirited nature of human interaction much like that which occurred with some frequency throughout the seventeenth-century American colonies, if court records are to be believed. The household depicted is a reasonably wealthy one, but similar domestic environments could have been encountered among the gentry of Boston and Jamestown. Indeed, many of the objects recovered from seventeenth-century American sites were manufactured in Holland and other European

countries. Therefore, the use of such genre scenes to aid in the interpretation of decorative arts and cultural behavior at an English settlement such as Jamestown is much more relevant than initial consideration might suggest.

The objects illustrated in the black and white photographs were excavated at Jamestown. Most were made prior to 1663, and closely resemble objects seen in Steen's painting. Beyond the obvious conclusion that items manufactured in Europe were being used simultaneously in the low countries and in English North America, these illustrations help depict the nature of seventeenth-century material culture, its archeological context, and the manner in which the surviving arti-

facts reflect the cultural behavior of those who used and discarded them.

Certain harsh realities must be recognized at the outset. Although the Jamestown objects do not, of course, represent the total range of surviving artifacts, the sad fact is that very little of the scene painted by Steen can ever be recovered in an excavation. The archeological remains of such a household probably would contain ceramic and glass objects, metal hardware, possibly one of the pewter vessels, clothing buttons, furniture hardware, fireplace equipment, brick tiles, window glass, turned lead strips, wall plaster, and perhaps bones of man and beast. (Hog bones would almost certainly appear, since pork was a desirable meat and any



Rhenish "Bellarmine" stoneware bottle (J-7147), 1630-40, 8 inches high, recovered from Well 21. Bottle is enclosed by an iron casement window frame (J-7291). 25" × 13¼", from an apparent pre-1650 context within Structure 1, Unit A.



Case bottle (J-7145), English or Dutch, 8½" high, found in a mid-seventeenth century deposit in Well 20.



Philadelphia-area red earthenware dish fragment with slip decoration of white pipe-clay, copper green, and iron oxide beneath lead glaze (INHP (FC) V-627), originally 8 inches in diameter, discarded c. 1765 in a brick lined-pit beneath 318 Market Street. (Smithsonian Institution).

pig which had acquired a habit of extracting the spigot from a wine cask was certain to be a domestic liability.) Organic materials such as clothing fabrics and wooden furniture, as well as the more elaborate ceramic and glass vessels were rarely discarded. These would be indicated by the smallest of fragments—if at all. Thus, the material record of an historic archaeological site is not only a remnant of what once existed, but also of the least expensive household possessions.

Nevertheless, these apparent limitations are also the greatest strengths of the archeological record. Most recovered artifacts (particularly ceramics) are common objects sensitive to stylistic changes but used daily by the occupants. Further, these common

objects are frequently found in areas where they were put to use. As such, the artifacts reflect much of the daily routine and social patterning present in the past, as well as change in patterns and routine. The distribution of such mundane objects as tobacco pipes, nails, window pane, etc., as well as comparative distribution (different ceramic types, for example) can serve as define activity areas and help us to interpret interactions among social groups within a domestic setting. A greater understanding of social behavior and structure often can be established through careful study of changes in object material and design, and changes in where objects were used.

Occasionally, ornately decorated

objects of high quality are recovered from sites. Such objects, although not as rare as might be supposed, do indicate that something unusual has been encountered. It is sometimes difficult to determine whether a rare object's presence on a site is due to historically limited distribution or a locally high level of domestic violence.

Archeologists deduce that conditions were somewhat extraordinary at John Washington's Potomac River homestead during the third quarter of the seventeenth century. The dwelling site, currently within George Washington Birthplace National Monument on Virginia's Northern Neck, suggests a house similar in size and construction to many in the colony. His household possessions, however, included sealed "wine" bottles marked with his full name, a Venetian or Flemish multi-colored glass goblet and English North Devon sgraffito pottery. It would appear that John Washington sought to express his rising position in the Virginia social structure with assorted household goods, rather than through the architectural framework which housed them.

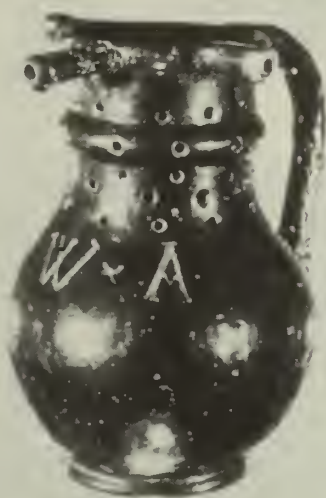
All too often the attribution of "earliest," "largest," or "first" to an object is simply a function of the limited amount of archeological research at related sites. Be that as it may, a Jamestown spoon handle bearing the date 1675 and the maker's mark of Joseph Copeland from nearby Chuckastuck does represent the oldest known piece of American pewter.

The growth of colonial manufactures is clearly manifested in the archeological record, particularly with regards to ceramics. Earthenwares were being produced in the colonies in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, and redware potteries were extensive by 1750. Philadelphia became a major center of earthenware production.

The decade of the 1720's witnessed the emergence of stoneware potteries in Philadelphia and Virginia. At a time when English stoneware potteries were competing with Germanic wares from the Rhine Valley, Anthony Duche of Philadelphia produced copies of the blue and gray Rhenish vessels. The William Rogers pottery in Yorktown created brown stoneware rivaling the best being made in England.

Philadelphia-area red earthenware puzzle jug with manganese colored lead glaze on exterior (INHP-12201), 8¾" high. Jug, bearing owner's initials WA, was discarded c. 1750-60 in a brick-lined pit near Morris Alley. (Marti Deegan, NPS.)

Silver spoon with slipped end handle (J-7053) and owners' initials WEC, 6¾" long, possibly made in Exeter, England, second quarter of seventeenth century.



Kaolin tobacco pipes, probably English, second quarter of seventeenth century. Larger fragment (J-7862), measures 7".

Wine glass stem with embossed lion's mask (J-7052), 5 inches long. Wine glass may have been produced in Venice or Flanders, or by European craftsmen in London, during first quarter of seventeenth century. Fragment was discarded in ice pit (Structure 128) c. 1680.

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*Stenciled Pompeiian Revival room,
Gatewood residence, San Francisco.*



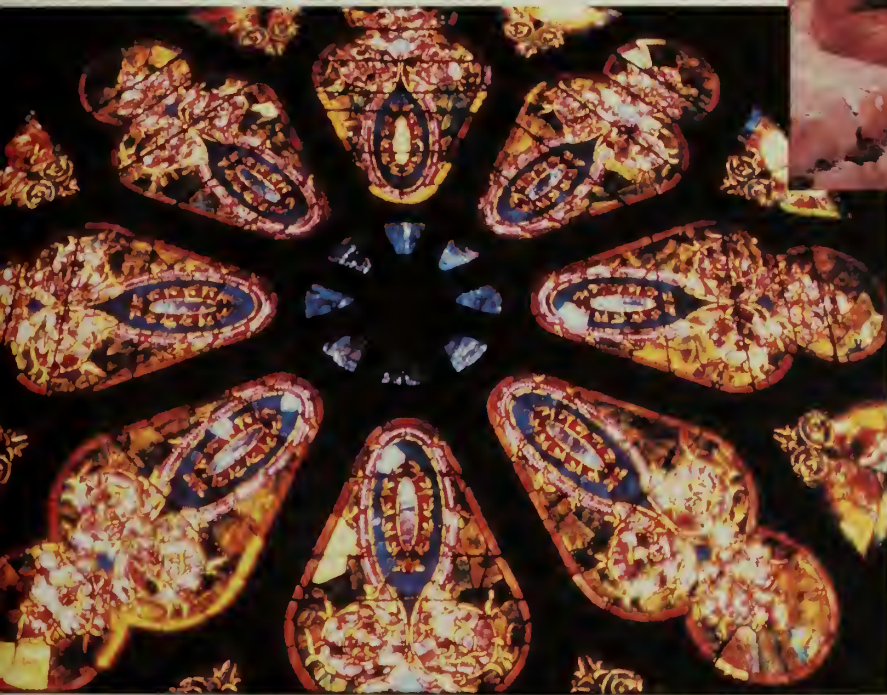
"Beware of Luxury," Jan Steen, 1663. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemaldegalerie, Vienna.

Funding for color centerfold donated by
Eastern National Park and Monument
Association, Executive Director F. L. Rath, Jr.

"Neighbors," by William R. Leigh, belonged to Eleanor Roosevelt at the time of her death.



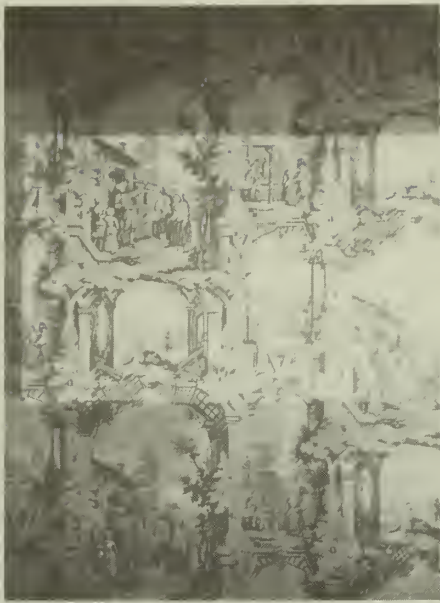
Detail from the painted chapel doors of the Russian Bishop's House at Sitka NHP, showing Saint Michael struggling with Satan.



Stained glass window, Minneapolis, Minnesota. (Photo courtesy of SIS Project)

Ironmaster's House, Hopewell Village NHS, showing circa 1940 reproduction striped carpeting.





Preserving Wallpaper in Historic Homes— Simple Techniques for Cleaning and Maintaining Non-historic Wallpapers

Andrea Gilmore

Wallpaper, historically the most popular decorative wall treatment for American homes, is found in the majority of the historic houses owned by the National Park Service. The wallpapers range from complete rooms of

Circa 1930 wallpaper hanging at Narbonne House, Salem Maritime NHS, showing area cleaned with opaline dry cleaning pad.

elaborate, nineteenth century French scenic paper, such as the Zuber Paysage a Chasses at Lindenwald, the home of Martin Van Buren in Kinderhook, New York to twentieth century, screen printed papers, like that hanging in the chintz room at the home of Franklin D. Roosevelt in Hyde Park, New York. The preservation of these wallpapers presents curators and architectural conservators with a multitude of questions regarding their care—how to readhere loose areas of wallpaper to the substrate, how to mend tears in the wallpaper, how to clean soiled areas and keep them clean, and how to prevent further general deterioration.

Prior to undertaking any work on a wallpaper, both its historical significance and condition should be documented. Establishing a wallpaper's historical significance involves identifying its provenance and date of manufacture, as well as its import to the restoration period of the structure. Documenting a wallpaper's condition requires a thorough examination of the wallpaper and its substrate as well as the recording of all visible physical deterioration. Areas of deterioration should also be documented with black and white photos. Guidelines for historical documentation and condition descriptions have been compiled by the North Atlantic Historic Preservation Center and are available upon request. Monitoring of the environment in which the paper hangs should be carried out and recorded over a full year's time. Relative humidity and temperature, as well as ultraviolet light levels, should be measured.

Once the historical significance and general condition of a wallpaper have been determined, a treatment plan can be prescribed. If documentation reveals that a wallpaper is historically significant in its manufacture and hanging date to the restoration period of the house, the treatment plan should be prescribed and carried out by a certified paper conservator. If, on the other hand, a paper is non-historic, (does not date to the restoration period or is a reproduction

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The site of the Rogers pottery in Yorktown is currently within the boundary of Colonial National Historical Park; the excavated remnants of two kilns probably represent the most well-preserved of their kind encountered anywhere.

Philadelphia was also the location of the most ambitious ceramic endeavor in pre-Revolutionary America. For three years (1769-72), the firm of Bonnin and Morris manufactured the first American porcelain, in the soft paste tradition of English factories at Derby and Bow. Fragments of Bonnin and Morris vessels, as well as Duche stoneware, have been encountered during excavations within Independence National Historical Park.

Also from Independence, a spectacular puzzle jug was recovered from a mid-eighteenth century privy at Morris Alley. The vessel was coated with a manganese-tinted lead glaze, and bore the initials "WA"—probably indicating the intended owner. Such a vessel challenged a would-be imbibor to take a drink from a jug pierced by a lattice-work of holes below the rim. Since the "secret" channel through the handle was apparently obstructed, the vessel presented a puzzle without solution, which probably led to its disposal.

The fragment of slip-decorated dish was found within confines of the area later developed by Benjamin Franklin as a courtyard adjacent to his residence. This vessel, decorated with an elaborate tulip floral motif, reflects

the polygenetic cultural dynamic present within Pennsylvania. Such floral motifs, known to English potters, were produced by those of English descent in and around Philadelphia. The vessel, however, fits easily within the ceramic traditions of the Rhine Valley. Since American slipware production was most evident in southeastern Pennsylvania and western North Carolina, both areas of heavy Germanic settlement, vessels such as the one illustrated probably reflect the impact of Central Europeans on the young nation.

This brief discussion about the relationship between archeological research and the study of decorative arts has sought to emphasize their mutually beneficial nature. Curators often look to archeologists to answer questions related to the genesis, quantity, and type of objects used in early American households, and such questions are welcomed. If the quest for patterns of cultural behavior also recover unusual, esthetically exciting, or well-preserved objects, the cultural researchers, curators, exhibit designers, and the visiting public all benefit.

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to extend their sincere appreciation to Susan Hannah, Curator, Colonial National Historical Park, and Robert Giannini III, Curator, Independence National Historical Park, for their tireless efforts in procuring photographs from their collections.



David Orr is Regional Archeologist for the Mid-Atlantic Region. Brooke Blades and Douglas Campana are staff archeologists.

wallpaper from the historic period) cleaning and repairs may be carried out by a curator or museum technician. The preservation procedures described below are recommended only for general use on non-historic or reproduction wallpapers.

Wallpaper repairs must begin with the substrate, since nearly all wallpapers are pasted directly onto plaster walls. If the plaster is deteriorated - keys are broken or surfaces cracked and crumbling - stress will be transferred to the wallpaper that will cause it to tear and repeatedly lose its bond to the plaster. Plaster consolidation will probably involve the removal of portions of the wallpaper from the walls and may require the assistance of a paper conservator.

Once a substrate is repaired, loose areas of wallpaper can be readhered. The detached areas of wallpaper should be lifted and old dried paste and dirt removed from the plaster wall and reverse side of the wallpaper. A wheat starch paste, either a commercially available wheat starch wallpaper paste or a conservator's mix (see *Curatorial Care of Works of Art on Paper*, Anne F. Clapp, pp. 92-94) should then be applied to the reverse side of the wallpaper and the plaster wall. The paste should be fairly thin as it must penetrate and relax the paper so that it will conform to the often irregular surface of the old plaster walls. The paste should be applied with a small paste brush, available from a conservation supply store. A standard wallpaper paste brush, which is 8" wide, is usually too large for readhering work. The paste should be allowed to penetrate the wallpaper for several minutes before the paper is pressed against the plaster. Pressure should be applied to the wallpaper until it has bonded with the plaster wall. Once the bond is established, any excess paste should be removed from the surface of the wallpaper with a damp cloth.

Mending tears in a wallpaper that is hanging on the wall is difficult, since the standard procedure for mending a paper tear is to paste a long-fiber, unsized Japanese paper over the tear on the reverse side of the paper. If adjoining pieces of paper have fallen off the wall, they may be mended before being readhered to the walls; otherwise, most tears are left in the wallpaper and the adjoining sides pushed together when readhered to

the walls. Procedures for mending paper tears are described in *Curatorial Care of Works of Art on Paper*, Anne F. Clapp, p. 69.

Once a wallpaper has been repaired and readhered to the substrate, surface cleaning can be undertaken. Since most wallpaper printing media is water soluble, only dry cleaning techniques are recommended. Dry cleaning will remove surface dirt and dust that is not ingrained in the paper fibers, but will not remove water or grease stains. There are several different dry cleaning techniques that can be used. The choice of the appropriate cleaning procedure will depend on the surface characteristics of the wallpaper and should be determined by testing small inconspicuous areas. The preferred cleaning techniques should remove as much dirt as possible without causing damage to the printed paper surface.

General surface cleaning of loosely bonded surface dirt can be done with a soft sable brush. Brushing should be done in short strokes and applied with a minimal amount of pressure to avoid pushing the dirt into the paper and to prevent abrading of the printed pattern. A vacuum cleaner, with a low suction setting can also be used for removing loosely bonded dirt. It should be done with a plastic screen to protect the printed pattern. Vacuuming is especially useful for cleaning embossed or flocked wallpapers whose surface are uneven.

More securely bonded general surface dirt can be removed with kneadable erasers, such as the Opaline dry cleaning pad. The pad consists of crumbled eraser contained in a porous cloth bag. The pad is rubbed across the wallpaper's surface, which causes the crumbled eraser to sift through the bag and absorb the paper's surface dirt. After cleaning with a kneadable eraser pad, the surface of the wallpaper should be brushed or vacuummed to assure that none of the crumbly eraser remains on the paper's surface.

Insolated areas of dirt can be removed with tweezers or solid erasers. Tweezers are particularly useful for removing cobwebs or insect larvae. Solid erasers, which can be cut so that they have a sharp edge, are useful for removing pencil lines or small smudges. They can also be used effectively in narrow areas, such as between door and window casings.

Once a wallpaper has been repaired and cleaned, measures should be implemented to prevent and retard further deterioration. These measures should include:

- A. Maintenance of uniform temperature and humidity levels in the room where the wallpaper hangs. (Ideally 65 degree F. temperature, 55% relative humidity.)
- B. Control of ultraviolet light exposure. (An ideal U-V absorbing material will prevent UV down to 400 nm (nanometers) from passing through. UV rigid acrylic sheeting is one of the most suitable blocking materials available. UF-1 and UF-3 plexiglass, Perspex VE and Oroglass UF3 are all suitable. They are mounted on the interior window casings.)
- C. Protect wallpaper surfaces from human contact. Visitors to historic houses are tempted to touch any exposed surfaces, and flocked and embossed wallpapers are especially attractive. Areas of the room can be roped off so that visitors cannot get within reach of the wallpapers or areas within reach can be covered with a plexiglass shield.
- D. Protect from construction dirt. When construction or repair work is to be carried out elsewhere in the house, seal rooms in which wallpapers hang to prevent them from being covered with airborne dust.
- E. Prevent water damage to the wallpaper. Water causes dirt to migrate through the walls and will cause permanent staining. It may also cause adhesion failure. Sources of water damage can include leaking roofs, gutter back-ups, open windows, etc. All of these areas should be monitored to prevent water intrusion.

With these simple techniques for cleaning and maintaining non-historic wallpapers, their preservation should be assured for a number of years. ©

The author is an Architectural Conservator, North Atlantic Historic Preservation Center.

Climate Control in Furnished Room Exhibits

Diana Pardue

Faced with deciding how to interpret a building once inhabited by a famous person, the manager has traditionally turned to the furnished historic building museum as a solution. This type of exhibit places objects in a historical context by attempting to recreate the environment of a famous person, event, or period. The emphasis is on the total environment or setting, rather than the individual object. But can a balance be struck between the conflicting relative humidity requirements for historic buildings and objects without destroying either one or both? A variety of approaches can be considered to help solve this dilemma.

The major cause of a museum object's deterioration is the adverse reaction between the object and its environment. Relative humidity (the ratio of the amount of water vapor actually present in a volume of air to the maximum amount possible at the same temperature) is perhaps the most important environmental problem to control—and the most difficult in most historic buildings.

Danger limits for relative humidity have been set at 40%-65% for moisture-absorbent materials (such as wood, textiles, paper, paintings, leather, bone, animal skins, and plant specimens). Such organic substances can be permanently damaged by over-drying at relative humidities below 40%; relative humidities above 70% encourage mildew, mold, and the presence of insects. A relative humidity of 50% has been suggested most often as desirable. The frequently quoted acceptable range of $\pm 5\%$ is based on the performance of air conditioning and heating systems rather than a toleration for deterioration range of museum objects. Lists of specific types of materials and their optimum relative humidity levels have been published, but these levels are primarily useful only in temperate climates, not arid or humid zones (Gary Thomson, *The Museum Environment*, 1978).

Since rapid fluctuations in relative humidity are the most damaging to museum objects, a constant level should be maintained at all times. Air conditioning and heating systems represent the best way. Some of the more recent acquired historic build-

ings (such as the Eisenhower Home) have had central air conditioning for many years. To turn off the air conditioning in the Eisenhower Home could be just as damaging to the building as introducing it into the 18th century Wick House at Morristown. This method, therefore, is not acceptable for all buildings, particularly historic buildings which have never had mechanical climate control systems. There is also the potential risk of damaging a building if a relative humidity of 50% is maintained during the cold winter months (Raymond H. Lafontaine, "Humidistatically Controlled Heating").

A building's internal environment is a delicate balance of influences, the two main ones being relative humidity and temperature which are interdependent upon each other. Differences in relative humidity between the inside and outside of a building tend to equalize by the transfer of water vapor from the wetter air to the drier. During cold winter months, the warm moist air inside the building will move outwards through the walls and as the temperature drops, the dew point can be reached which will result in condensation within the walls of the building (if no vapor barrier is present). This condensation can irreversibly damage the wall construction by promoting wood rot and freezing within the walls (Bernard Feilden, *Conservation of Historic Buildings*, 1982).

A constant, year-round relative humidity level of 50% for museum objects is too high for most buildings in climates with cold winters that require indoor heating; most architects recommend maintaining the relative humidity at 35% or below during the colder months to prevent condensation within the exterior walls. Vapor barriers placed on the inner side of the exterior wall can prevent this condensation; however, few historic buildings within the National Park Service have such barriers since their installation in many instances would damage historic wall surfaces.

Any intervention or change to an existing building must be handled with care and consideration. Before alterations are made to the internal environment, temperature and relative humidity readings need to be

taken, both inside and outside the building, for an entire year. Hygrothermographs should be used; these instruments record the existing conditions on weekly or monthly charts. Hygrothermographs must be calibrated regularly (every one to three months) using a sling or aspirating psychrometer. A log should also be kept of activities or elements influencing the hygrothermograph readings (rain, snow, large tour groups, mopping floors). This establishes the environmental baseline from which building changes can be considered. It provides a record of seasonal variations and how the building responds to them, as well as how it acts as a buffer for the objects it protects.

Problems with conflicting relative humidity requirements have resulted in the relaxation of relative humidity standards for objects in museums, particularly in Canada. A gradual decrease in relative humidity to 35%



Living room at Scotty's Castle, showing the use of tiles, wrought iron, Italian pottery, and custom designed furniture, 1930-1935.

in the winter months is now an accepted norm (Raymond H. Lafontaine, "Environmental Norms for Canada Museums, Art Galleries and Archives," April 1981). Since rapid changes in relative humidity are the most damaging to objects, wide, slow variations over the period of a year are preferable. Objects can be stabilized in conditions other than the suggested range of 40%-65%. When deciding what the relative humidity level should be for a group of objects

The Assembly Room:

All Those Reinterpretations and It's Still Not Right?

Doris D. Fanelli

Between 1816 and today, the Assembly Room in Independence Hall has undergone eight major restorations and refurnishings as well as innumerable rearrangements of artifacts. The assembly chamber where the Declaration of Independence was signed and the United States Constitution was framed is probably the most significant and most restored historic room in this country. All those reinterpretations and it's still not right?

It is possible to describe the Assembly Room as the material component of a folk religion instilling patriotism as well as a knowledge of this country's historical origins in its citizens. In this way, such restorations are essential parts of a social phenomenon extending beyond American



Max Rosenthal (1833-1918) watercolor on paper showing the Liberty Bell. Watson's chair, composed of relic woods associated with William Penn, Christopher Columbus, and other worthies, is in the right foreground.

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in a furnished building, consideration should be given to the relative humidity levels the objects have become accustomed to in the past as well as the average relative humidity conditions outside the building. The recording of temperature and relative humidity levels inside and outside the building, as mentioned previously, will provide necessary information.

Many historic building interiors are made up of a large amount of buffering material, such as wood panelling, stone, plaster, brick, and textiles. These materials absorb moisture when the relative humidity is high, and release it when the air is dry, thus slowing down the fluctuation rate in response to outdoor changes in relative humidity (Feilden, 1982). This buffering effect can be demonstrated by comparing chart readings from a hygrothermograph placed in a furnished room and a hygrothermograph placed outside on the same side of the building as the room. Historically appropriate carpeting and curtains are good buffering materials. The living room at Scotty's Castle is a good example of how the interior architectural features and the furnishings can help to buffer the fluctuations within the room.

The exhibit case provides an excellent buffer from rapid fluctuations in relative humidity, when used in conjunction with conditioned silica gel. The case is built or retrofitted with a compartment (directly beneath the board supporting the displayed objects) where trays of conditioned silica gel can be placed. The silica gel is conditioned at the desired relative humidity level for the objects in the exhibit case and will maintain the interior environment of the case at this level for a period of time. When the relative humidity level in the case goes above a predetermined level, the silica gel will need to be reactivated. Exhibit cases with compartments for silica gel have been designed by the Harpers Ferry Center and are now in use at several parks. This approach limits control of relative humidity to the inside of the exhibit case, eliminating the possibility of structural damage to the building. However, it is not practical for furnished room exhibits or very large objects (Lafontaine, April 1981). Objects sensitive to extremes in relative humidity should not be used in an open exhibit (such as a furnished room) but in closed exhibit cases in a controlled environment. An exhibit area that mixes fur-

nished room areas and closed exhibit cases might be desirable in some situations.

This discussion suggests various approaches by which the relative humidity within a building can be controlled at levels satisfying the needs of exhibited objects without damaging the building. The internal environment of each building is unique; no general recommendations or approaches can be made to suit all situations. When planning is initiated to decide how buildings and objects will be used to interpret the park themes, preservation considerations must be part of this process. Architects, curators, and conservators should be involved in the interpretive planning process, so that if preservation of the building and the exhibited objects conflict, various solutions can be addressed from the start, rather than making undesirable compromises later. ©

The author is a staff curator with the Curatorial Services Branch, WASO, stationed in Harpers Ferry.

culture—the establishment and maintenance of patriotic shrines. The following material examines this development, looking at changes in the Assembly Room over time, as well as comparing it to ancient Roman state religion and to Shinto in modern Japan.

In 1729, the colonial government determined to erect a building for its various branches. Carpenter Edmund Woolley began construction of lawyer Andrew Hamilton's design in 1732. Completed in 1750, the Pennsylvania State House was the largest and most impressive work of public architecture in the American colonies. Immediately, the building was a landmark and a tourist attraction.

The Pennsylvania Assembly met in the east room on the first floor. Double doors opened from the central

events established the State House and the Assembly Room's prominent position on the American cultural landscape.

In 1799, the state capital left Philadelphia. State and Philadelphia County courts sat in the Assembly Room and the remainder of the building served as a polling place. The State House entered a long period of "white elephantship." In 1802, Charles Willson Peale acquired the use of the Assembly Room and the entire second floor for his museum of art and natural history specimens. The Peale Museum's presence contributed to the public's growing perception of the Assembly Room as a cabinet of curiosities.

In 1819, artist John Trumbull later visited the site depicted in his famous painting, *The Declaration of Independence*.

receive the body of Henry Clay. The city brought the Liberty Bell, then a symbol of the abolitionist movement, down from the tower and placed it in the room as an allusion to Clay's last great political achievement, the Compromise of 1850. Partially as a reaction to continued sectional issues that portended American disunity throughout that decade, the Committee on City Property began to collect relics associated with the Assembly Room. This hoarding of national treasures reminded the public of the unified purpose that founded the country.

An equal impetus to relic collection was the early folklore movement. The interest in documenting oral and material traditions flourished in western Europe in the nineteenth century as an important component of the nationalist movement. In America, long before the founding of the American Folklore Society in 1888, antiquarians were documenting traditions and forming small societies. In 1830, John Fanning Watson published a local history redolent with legends and traditions in Philadelphia. Watson's interests included the Assembly Room. In 1838, he designed a "liberty and equality" chair supposedly after the original "rising sun" chair John Folwell made for the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1779.

Despite the Assembly Room's promotion as the bastion of unification in the 1850's, the city still could not determine what to do with Independence Hall. Civic ceremonies and receptions were held in the Assembly Room, but not one considered the surrounding space sacred. Frank M. Etting, former state treasurer, noted that the city used the basement beneath the room as a dog pound. He urged the creation of a national museum as part of Philadelphia's preparation for the nation's centennial. Formally inaugurated in 1872, the museum included the dedication of Independence Hall as "a perpetual monument to the Founders of America." Assisted by a ladies' committee, Etting rearranged the Assembly Room. He removed the Liberty Bell, replaced the president's platform on the east wall, and elevated the silver inkstand reputedly used to sign the Declaration and the Constitution to the status of the most sacred object in the room. The Peale portraits hung on every available inch



John Trumbull, "Declaration of Independence," oil on canvas, 1786. For many years, Trumbull's version of this event was presumed historically correct.

hall into the nearly forty-foot square by twenty-foot high space. Assemblymen sat at small tables facing their president who presided from a dais centered on the east wall. Beginning May 10, 1775, the Assembly allowed the Second Continental Congress to assume the space. Here, on July 4, 1776, the delegates signed the Declaration of Independence. Eleven years later, the Federal Convention met in the Assembly Room from May 25 to September 17, 1787, where they framed and signed the United States Constitution. These two important

dence, and dejectedly noted that "the spirit of innovation laid unhallowed hands upon it." Trumbull's rhetoric demonstrates two contemporary trends. First, the popular mind had begun to identify the Assembly Room as an inviolate, sacred place. Second, Trumbull's antipathy towards "that restless spirit of change which so much prevails in this country" describes a growing awareness of America's singular traditional heritage.

On July 2, 1852, the Assembly Room was draped in mourning to

of wall space. The portrait subjects, Etting asserted, were "actors in a drama." A brass rail separated the visitors from the artifacts. This emphasis on theatricality contributed to the visitor's sense that history was mysterious and wonderful, even a bit unknowable.

The City of Philadelphia removed its government operations from the State House in 1895. This change occasioned the first restoration of the entire building. Architect T. Mellon Rogers modified the Assembly Room's appointments to what historic architect Charles Peterson described as a "caricature of eighteenth century woodwork." The Assembly Room remained a display of portraits, furnishings, and relics, but Rogers substituted velvet ropes for Etting's brass barriers and the National Museum Committee rearranged the displays.

At this point the scope of artifacts permitted in the Assembly Room narrowed. The committee culled displays and only retained objects with a direct relation to the most historic events that occurred there. The city also appointed its first curator to oversee the growing collections.

Although the curator experimented with various arrangements of objects, no other full-scale refurnishings were attempted before the National Park Service accepted jurisdiction for the buildings and their collections in 1951. Even when period display alcoves were used in the East Wing of the National Museum, the Assembly Room remained a shrine. The present restoration began in 1953 and continued through the mid-1960s. With the scientific techniques of historic preservation at their disposal, Park Service architects restored the room to its correct eighteenth-century architectural appearance. The refurnishing, however, was another matter.

Today, visitors to the Assembly Room see an evocative enshrinement, not an accurate restoration of the furnishings to a particular point in time. Notwithstanding the usual absence of sounds, smells, and tactile discomforts absent from the majority of museums that claim to recreate the past, the Assembly Room has breaches of logic. Because the two events critical to the room's existence occurred eleven years apart, the visitor must suspend a reliance upon fact, much as a listener to a folk tale or



Robert Edge Pine and Edward Savage, "Congress Voting Independence." Today, Savage's version is believed the most architecturally accurate.

ballad does. The furnishings represent an amalgam of prototypes for items documented to have been in the room before and after the destructive British occupation. Visitors stand behind a reproduction of the wooden bar that separated the delegates from the public in the eighteenth century. Only interpreters stand behind the bar from where they speak to visitors. For a time during the Bicentennial of the Declaration in the mid-1970s, the park experimented with costumed interpretation. This practice was judged unsuccessful and abandoned.

Patriotism, as historian Merle Curti has noted, is an abstract emotion which requires a knowledge of the country's history and purpose to become an active virtue. Many cultures have enshrined physical spaces and materials that relate to their civic origins. This enshrinement dictates and controls the flow of beliefs and information while simultaneously responding to society's needs for patriotic reinforcement.

In ancient Rome, for example, the Senate maintained control over the state religion, which featured calendar feasts and official ceremonies as well as myriad temples to various deities. This was not an emotion-charged belief system. Priests performed meticulous rituals but prophets were actively dis-

dained. The various cults stressed a *pax deorum* or covenant with the gods that implied a reciprocal relationship of worship in return for civic favors. Eventually, the Romans adopted from the Greeks the practice of giving divine homage to notable humans. In 46 B.C., *divus Julius*, an official cult honoring the charismatic Julius Caesar, was permitted. In America today, we have a folk religion of patriotism which celebrates the founding of our nation. Calendar feasts include Independence Day and Presidents Day. Patriotic societies hold official ceremonies to describe and perpetuate aspects of civic pride. Homage paid to George Washington compares with the *divus Julius* cult. Today, Independence Hall is the material symbol of American patriotism.

While our values of patriotism are more the lineal descendants of ancient Rome, Japanese Shinto, still in practice, offers an immediate comparison. Shinto has no written doctrine. Its "scripture" is certain ancient historical writings of political and dynastic interest. Information about the cult is orally transmitted and the Japanese carry no clear fixed definitions of it. Followers of Shinto believe in a complex system of *anima* or *Kami* which

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range from abstract qualities such as growth or fertility to the individual spirits of national heroes and dead ancestors. Propitiation of Kami at appropriate shrines is believed to maintain equilibrium from the familial to the Imperial levels of society.

This religion, as old as Japan itself, has an elaborate, symbolic material culture. Shrines are the residences of Kami and the physical structures are considered sanctified. The shrine system in Japan has much in common with the NPS historic park system. Today, most of modern Japan's shrines are organized under a national shrine association which has a bureaucratic structure of offices. Locally, shrines are managed by priests and committees of worshippers who own the shrine land and buildings, and who raise funds from private donation. The entire affair varies and may be a complex of buildings; however, in plan, all shrines have a worship area and an inner chamber where the holiest object of the particular cult resides. Objects such as purification wands, weapons, and banners are arranged in symbolic patterns and displayed throughout the shrine. Through the performance of rituals and through tours, the shrine priests meditate the beliefs of the cult for the worshippers. Access to the sacred areas are controlled and the space around the building is symbolically decorated and considered sacred. At stalls near the property, visitors may purchase charms and amulets associated with the shrine.

If this sounds much like the Assembly Room at Independence National Historical Park, it is because the establishment of patriotic religion is a cross-cultural phenomenon and its practice conforms to certain material and social models. Demarking the site of a great historical event as sacred and euhemerizing the participants is a way of preserving the traditions that are central to patriotism. Each of the Assembly Room's major restorations occurred when there was a change in the status of Independence Hall's ownership or occupancy, or for purposes of resanctification during anniversary celebrations.

While the patriotic lessons dispensed through the Assembly Room have remained constant, the specific method of presenting them through an arrangement of objects and mediation by guides has changed. The most powerful symbolic object in the building was the Liberty Bell. But when the most sacred object is removed, a shrine loses its efficacy unless another object replaces it. When the Park Service moved the bell to its new pavilion in 1976, the hall temporarily lost some of its sanctity. This has been partially regained through the Syng inkstand which gradually has assumed more importance. Tightened security and an elaborate protective ritual have developed around it.

Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., historian of the American preservation movement, visited Independence last year and predicted that the Assembly Room would have another restoration before the year 2000. In a sense, the Park Service restoration has never been finished. We have never implemented many of the changes recommended in the furnishings plan; subsequent study or debate has refuted others. This approach to restoration could well continue until 2000. But if Hosmer had a complete architectural renovation in mind, only two types of events could catalyze it: a celebratory occasion revolving around the historic events that occurred in this room or a change in the building's status or ownership. Neither one seems likely, since the present arrangement of city ownership with Park Service administration and operation seems satisfactory, and the park has planned no restoration for the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, the only major anniversary before 2000. I don't believe Hosmer's prediction. But then, I'm viewing the Assembly Room through the perspective of Roman state religion in which the public officials controlled the Sybylline oracles and actively discouraged prophecy. ©

The author is Supervisory Curator at Independence National Historical Park, with an M.A. from the Winterthur Program and a Ph.D. in folklore. This article is excerpted from a longer article being produced for publication elsewhere.

A Look Inside:

Recognizing Significant Interiors

Peggy A. Gustave, ASID

Do you remember the ice cream parlor that served cherry phosphates, or the neighborhood grocery with barrels of crackers, porcelain fixtures, and sawdust floors? Chances are when you daydream about the American past, your thoughts return to the familiar interiors of lost buildings such as these. Now, imagine the grand stairs at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art replaced with escalators, or the Old Faithful Lodge at Yellowstone Park with mylar wall-coverings and track lights. No doubt you find the very thought absurd or, at minimum, ill-conceived. These mind pictures point to the direct relationship interiors have to the envelope of the building. They also suggest our fascination with the interior spaces where our forefathers conducted the affairs of daily life.

SIGNIFICANT INTERIORS SURVEY		NATIONAL FORM (PLEASE PRINT)	
BUILDING HISTORY FOR BUILDING # B D			
SURVEY STATUS		COMPLETE <input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS ADD'L HIST INFO <input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS INTERIOR DESC <input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS ARCH <input type="checkbox"/> ADD'L DES <input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS DATES <input type="checkbox"/> TO BE SURVEYED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT SIGNIFICANT <input type="checkbox"/> TOLERANCE <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
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NUMERIC ADDRESS		STREET	
COMMUNITY/CITY		STATE	
COUNTRY			
LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
LIBRARY STATUS		INDIVIDUAL <input type="checkbox"/> INTERIOR <input type="checkbox"/> HISTORIC DISTRICT <input type="checkbox"/> NATIONAL REGISTER <input type="checkbox"/>	
PUBLIC ACCESS		YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> RESTRICTED <input type="checkbox"/>	
OWNER/DEPT		PUBLIC <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE <input type="checkbox"/>	
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OTHER DOCUMENTATION			
ORIGINAL USE(S) OF BUILDING			
PRESENT USE(S) OF BUILDING			
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INTERIOR DESIGNER(S) ON 2ND ALTERATION			
INTERIOR DESIGNER(S) ON ADD'L ALTERATIONS			
ORIGINAL ARCHITECT(S)			
ARCHITECT(S) ON 1ST ALTERATION			
ARCHITECT(S) ON 2ND ALTERATION			
ARCHITECT(S) ON ADD'L ALTERATIONS			
ORIGINAL BUILDER/CONTRACTOR(S)			
BUILDER/CONTRACTOR(S) ON 1ST ALTERATION			
BUILDER/CONTRACTOR(S) ON 2ND ALTERATION			
BUILDER/CONTRACTOR(S) ON ADD'L ALTERATIONS			

Sample page from *Significant Interiors Survey*.

According to Elliot Willensky, AIA, co-author of the *AIA Guide to New York City*, an important part of the meaning of architecture is often exemplified in the most fragile of its elements—the design, appearance, and manner of use of interior space. Primarily, buildings are erected as shelters . . . for internal use and habitation. There is an intimate and private



Restoration of the Old Arcade in Cleveland, Ohio. Before and After. (Photo courtesy of SIS Project)

relationship between a building's interior space and the people who use it, a relationship which does not exist in the exposure of its structural skin to the street. Indeed, the artistry or lack of artistry pertaining to interior spaces not only makes a statement about design, but as material culture, it reveals important insights into living patterns and cultural heritage. Nevertheless, time and again thousands of older homes, imposing building lobbies, palatial hotels, and lavish restaurants have met the wrecker's ball, or been brutalized out of existence by remodeling or modernization. Why? Partly because the value of their interior space went unrecognized.

"It's like taking a scalpel and carving out a piece of our memory," said Rita St. Claire, Fellow of the American Society of Interior Designers (FASID). Interior spaces designed and built by past generations often represent the best expression of design, craftsmanship and artistic endeavors of the period. However, delicately carved mantelpieces, elegantly detailed plaster ceilings, fine stained glass windows and expertly crafted cabinetry have been resigned to town dumps, blanketed by modern materials, or otherwise destroyed by well-

meaning owners or professionals ignorant of the value attributable to these historic interior elements.

While great pains have been taken to preserve the structural integrity and exteriors of many American buildings, developers, architects and even interior designers have largely ignored the insides. Certainly, we cannot suggest that just because interiors exist behind closed doors, they do not matter.

Determining Significant Interiors

A major concern in preserving interiors, however, is the determination of exactly what is and is not significant. Where significant interiors have survived intact, they should be preserved. Where important interiors have been covered up, they should be revealed and repaired. In keeping with National Park Service policy, there may be a good reason to restore lost interiors.

In *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, John Ruskin argued that we have no right to touch the buildings of past times. "They are not ours," he said. "They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us." He and others pleaded the cause of anti-scrape, by which each

successive layer attached to a structure becomes significant in its own right, and the most recent is preferred to the past.

The point at which we depart from the theories of these past masters in working toward the preservation of earlier interiors is the identification of character-defining elements for the original design. For example, color helps to define character. Since color trends have moved away from salmon and turquoise, a Frank Lloyd Wright residential building may receive non-historic changes to its woodwork. Some may argue that mauve and mint are as sensitive to the native stone and copper cladding as the original colors and that such a change is equally a product of its own time. Nevertheless, such a change offers no contribution to posterity's understanding of Wright's aesthetics. The responsible colorist will act accordingly, giving back the character of the color which the original designer intended for us to see. Accurate colors are essential to a restoration, and the technology for making these color selections is relatively straight forward.

Room arrangements and floorplans also define character. The desire for "new" spaces and the enthusiasm of "found space" in rehabilitation projects often affects the qualities of historic interiors. A historic Vermont inn loses some of its charm when two small rooms become a mini-suite after the demolition of interior walls. A Tennessee pre-Civil War farmhouse is altered aesthetically by the relocation of its central stairs.

Use of furniture, art, and accessories provide another category offering insight into the past. A Baltimore row house may display a peculiar juxtaposition of German tiles, Spanish pine furniture, Portuguese baskets, Boston ferns, and fabrics from Provence in order to create an "American Country Kitchen." The inappropriate use of furnishings and art weakens the original statement made by the structure. The eye is deceived; the mind is confused; and the interior loses integrity.

In the same way, the Alexandria tavern should be furnished with pewter and stoneware, not Imari porcelain or Baroque silver. However, the interiors of the Newport mansion can successfully display tapestries from Brussels and glass

continued on page 26

chandeliers from Italy; not so the Greene and Greene bungalow in California.

Even in the area of adaptive use, it is important to remember that interiors are a product of people, economics and culture, as well as of time. Reused train sheds, cow barns, and schools once had uses separate from the retail shops, restaurants, and retirement homes they have become. A change of interior transforms the train shed into a series of retail shops. Barns become a place for beef on a platter rather than on the hoof. The building where our seniors were educated now becomes a residence for them in their twilight years. The exterior significance of these structures may not have been lost, but the interiors generally will have been modified significantly. Nevertheless, retention of interior elements which define character should be sought. Indeed, finding a good use for existing interior space may prove to be the best way to preserve it.

Significant Interiors Survey

"We cannot hope to preserve that which we do not know we have," said R. Michael Brown, FASID, of New York in 1979. With that thought, he conceived the Significant Interiors Survey as an activity of the American Society of Interior Designers.



Loew's King, Brooklyn, New York. (Photo courtesy of SIS Project)

The Significant Interiors Survey (SIS) is an ongoing inventory, with documentation, of important interior spaces in the United States. It is a permanent descriptive and photographic record available to the public nationwide, but with particular value in the cities to which the material directly applies.

Because interior design is a fragile art, the survey seeks to include all interiors of historical, aesthetic, and/or cultural interest. All types of inter-

iors, from the industrial to the residential, and the palatial to the common, are part of our collective experience of the built environment. While the survey contains primarily historic interiors, there are some modern spaces.

Local surveys are performed primarily by ASID chapters and are often co-sponsored by preservation, historic or civic organizations, or academic institutions. It is coordinated by the national survey staff at ASID headquarters in New York, with financial support by ASID, the National Endowment for the Arts, Scalomandre, Stroheim and Romann, Brickel Associates, and other organizations.

Surveys are now being conducted in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Phoenix, Cleveland, Houston, Baltimore, Washington, and Tallahassee, to name a few. The survey staff published a manual on surveying interiors, *Preserving A Fragile Art*, as well as a tour brochure describing 31 New York interiors. Additional surveys are being initiated, and other publications and a major traveling exhibition are being planned. A role clearly exists for the National Park Service in the survey. NPS historic interiors should be included on the SIS.

The survey gathers background research from local libraries, historical societies, city building departments, corporate files and periodicals. This information is included in each building's research folder. A surveyor completes a survey form that includes de-



Modification of interior space from an old railroad terminal into a restaurant, St. Paul, Minnesota. (Photo courtesy of Mary Ellen Hern)

tailed descriptions of each important space and its character-defining elements. Slides and other photographic documentation are taken. Information from survey forms is entered into the ASID national headquarters computer for easy retrieval and updating, while the original research and photographs currently remain in the survey's home city.

The Significant Interiors Survey provides a unique, invaluable examination of American interior design. It can be used by a variety of professionals from architects, historians, curators, and interior designers to scholars, educators and other concerned with the built environment. Most importantly, it can help building managers and owners understand where the interior of their building fits in. The survey plans to reach an even wider audience through future publications, exhibitions, walking tours, and associated educational projects. Perhaps in this way, all of us will begin to find some new favorites to appreciate and preserve in addition to the more familiar interiors which have established standards of design through the years. ©

The author is Chairman, ASID Historic Preservation, and the Vice President of Gustave Associates, Inc. in Phoenix, Arizona. For more information on the Significant Interiors Survey contact American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) National Headquarters, 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018 or phone 212/944-9220.

NPS Records, A Buried Treasure

Buford L. Pickens, FAIA

Researchers from the private sector look for neglected but significant information, which if published in a new, appropriate context, could reach an interested audience. For several reasons, NPS records and reports provide an attractive starting point. First, they cover a broad spectrum of perennially intriguing subjects related to our cultural history. Second, they present a disciplined, professional inquiry—firsthand observations supported by photographs, drawings, and other media. Finally, the authors of some reports began their careers at the outset as authoritative specialists; others have since become so. Despite the advantages, however, original copies of these reports often prove difficult to locate.

When publishing older documents, what counts is the quality of the recorded observations. In many cases, the older the document the better, for the original source of data may no longer exist. A building may have been demolished or severely altered; the total environment of the site may have changed radically. Thus, the early account becomes solid gold for today's cautious researcher. Consider the following titles of NPS reports

written in the 1930s: "Sod Houses of the Western Plains," "Catalogue of the Ligerwood Collection," or "Newspaper Accounts of the Battle of Antietam."

One discerning archivist stated that: . . . the goal of the National Park Service History Collection is to seek out and preserve the many kinds of materials which illustrate and document the history and culture of the NPS and to maintain these materials in a suitable form for research purposes. . . The value of such a collection will be enhanced as time goes on.¹

It is considered mandatory today to provide a publication editor with sharp, clean 8" × 10" black and white, glossy prints made from originals, not from photocopies. Since the National Park Service came into being, however, all its offices have been able to reproduce anything on a piece of white paper and to proliferate in-house editions of memos and reports, first by means of tissue carbons or mimeograph, and since about 1950, by use of the much simpler electrostatic copier. When a report passed through many hands, each succeeding reviewer thus found it easy to "correct" the author's manuscript, substituting new typos for originals, juggling the illustrations, deleting some, but seldom, if ever, improving the author's captions for closer ties to the text. Without an author's original typescript, it is impossible for a modern-day researcher to proofread a manuscript responsibly or to otherwise prepare it for publication.

For reediting in order to publish commercially, researchers are also interested in the raw material—memos that shed light on the instigation of the project, the author's notes and sketches, and above all, any correspondence that would explain the transmittal of the original report to the depository, with any acknowledgement. Many offices in the Park System maintain cumulative files that may need a careful sifting before potential historical material vanishes during "spring house cleaning."

One anonymous archivist from a federal agency who was assigned to process NPS records from the 1930s, offered this diagnosis:

. . . the records-keeping practices the Service during this period



Interior, General Store, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. (Photo courtesy of Mary Ellen Hern)

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Mission La Concepcion de Nuestra Senora de Caborca. A view from the dry Magdalena River bed, showing how the flooding had undermined major parts of the church. (photo, courtesy of John Clonts, WACC, Tucson, Arizona)

were chaotic. The method was neither numerical, alphabetical, nor by subject; it was an absurd amalgum of the three, apparently dictated by the whims of whoever happened to be in the office at the time. I have come upon instances where a file has several different headings crossed out prior to its deposit in the system.

Another librarian charged with organizing a veritable mountain of some two million prints and negatives explained:

The main problem has been that since the first official NPS photographer was hired in 1929, there have been seven to ten different chiefs of the photo library, each with his own idea of how the collection should be arranged. This leads to confusion when trying to locate items . . . because of ongoing projects, there is not at this time a finding aid (or a catalogue) to the collection.²

My own experience during the past year and a half has been obtained in the search for the original 1935-1936 typescript and illustrations of two NPS reports concerning a six-man expedition to record the remains of the "Kino chain of missions" in northern

Sonora, Mexico. Because the mission at Tumacacori National Monument was part of the same Kino chain, faced with urgent problems of stabilization

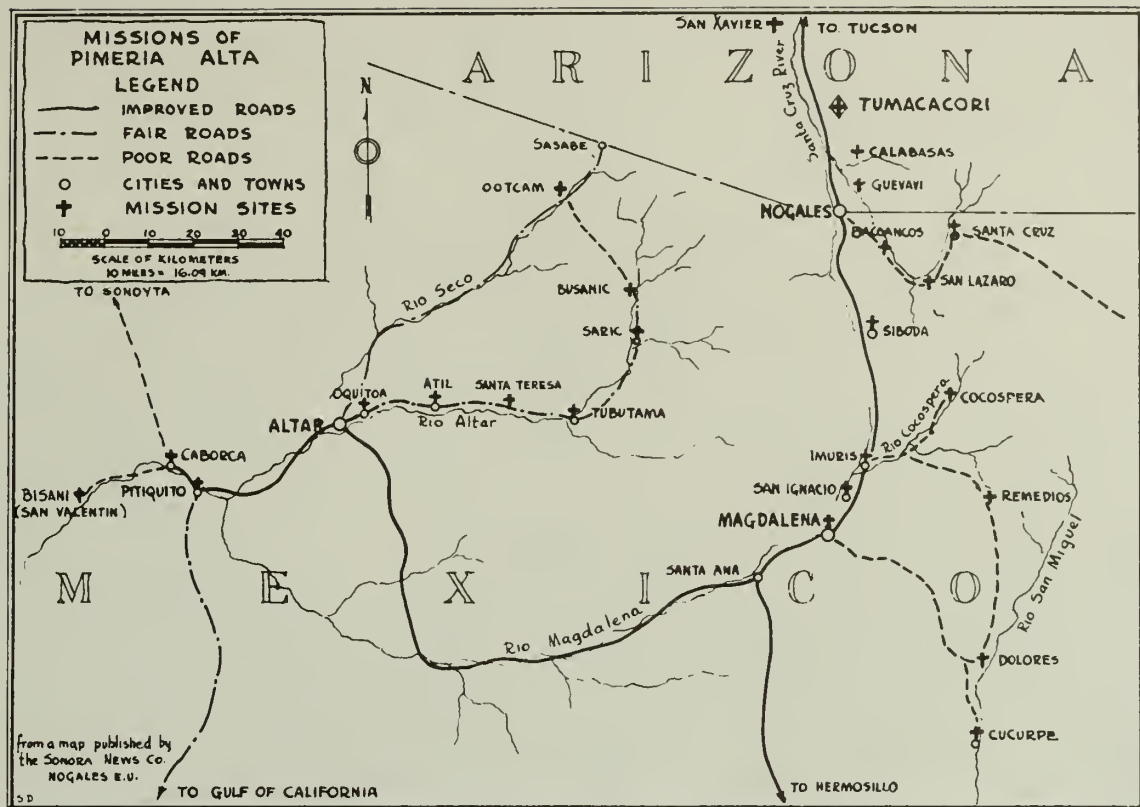
and restoration, as well as the design of a new museum, the purpose of the Sonora expedition was to secure architectural and historical data to aid in solving these problems. NPS Report "A" by Arthur Woodward covered the historical and archeological aspects. NPS Report "B" by Scofield DeLong and Leffler Miller recorded the architecture, with data and twenty-eight sheets of measured drawings. At the same time, George Grant, NPS's "star photographer," made more than three hundred photographs as part of the recording project.

Following a guided tour of the Sonora missions in April 1983, I read the two NPS reports and was impressed not only by their vivid descriptions but also by the fact that, after fifty years, they deserved to be considered historical documents worthy of publication, jointly if possible. Even the time for such a project seemed to be auspicious, with rising awareness in the United States of our Hispanic-American heritage and world-wide plans underway to celebrate "Columbus 500" in 1992.

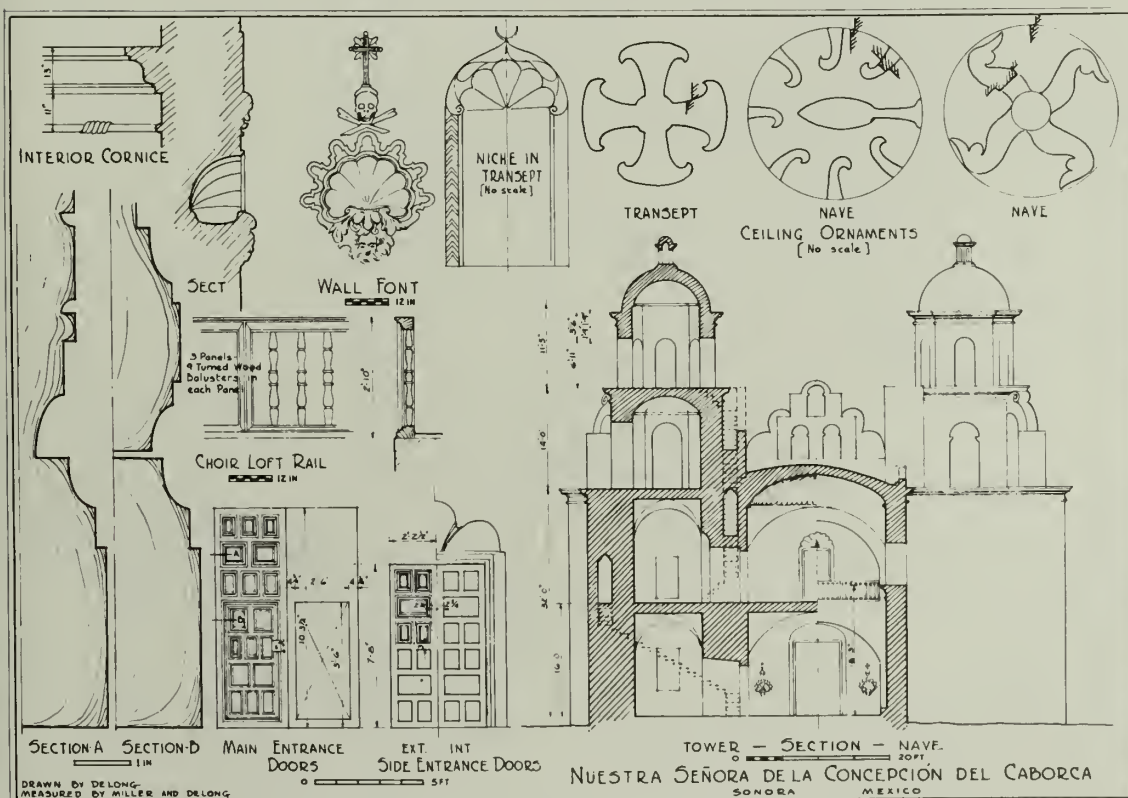
continued on page 30



The Sonora Expedition Members at the "Dolores" site, 29 October 1935. Left to right: Robert Rose, park naturalist and guide; George A. Grant, official NPS photographer; Leffler Miller, associate architect; Howard Tovrea, engineer; Arthur Woodward, archeologist-historian and interpreter; and Scofield DeLong, associate architect and elected party chief. (photo, courtesy of John Clonts, WACC, Tucson, Arizona)



Map and Itinerary showing four "Kino mission" sites in Arizona and twenty in Sonora, Mexico. Fall of 1935 was a time of social unrest in the region; the presidente and chief of police of Santa Ana were seized and shot the day after the NPS party arrived in Hermosillo to obtain the Governor's official study permit. They were asked to remain in the capitol until Federal troops could take control of the towns. (Hollis Phototechnics, photo, courtesy of N. J. Bleser)



A typical sheet of (28) drawings by the NPS architects, following measurements made during the 1935 expedition. In addition to the large structural forms, they also recorded decorative details for possible use at the Tumacacori National Monument Museum. (Hollis Phototechnics, photo, courtesy of N. J. Bleser)



Drawing by S. DeLong, 1935. Mission at Tubutama, Sonora, Mexico, colorful motifs painted over the classical cornice around the nave.

My inquiry for original copies began at the Western Regional Office in August 1983. They referred me to the Western Archeological and Conservation Center in Tucson, Arizona, where its excellent library is copying some 5,000 of George Grant's nitrate negatives onto safety film.³

For my immediate interest, however, the library conserved only tissue carbons and photocopies of the two Sonora reports, while the University of Arizona and the museum library at Tumacacori National Monument possessed only later editions of both. I eventually located the original "master" typescript of Sonora Report "B" at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. However, Report "A" was unavailable. Continuing my inquiry at the Denver Service Center, I found much related material, but still no clues to the source I sought. Nevertheless, I was encouraged to learn from Tumacacori that the Governor's Office in Hermosillo, Mexico had published (1983) the NPS Report "A" in Spanish!

All this partial success in the West encouraged me to visit the NPS Historical Collection at Harpers Ferry Center. Here, I found a most cordial welcome and a fine library, but still no clues to the location of the 1935 original edition of Report "A". I experienced similar results at the Harpers Ferry Center Graphics Research Office in Springfield, Virginia.

Finally, the Washington Office located on their own shelves a first-tissue, carbon-copy of Report "A" complete with usable glossy prints of all illustrations. Here, I also saw the beginnings of a computerized inventory of NPS formal reports—a Cul-

tural Resources Management Bibliography of more than 6,800 items, listed (a) by author, and (b) by date, but not yet by subject. It was quite surprising to discover the wide range of titles that go into background studies indirectly connected to particular parks, and encouraging to consider that the bibliography might make the work of future researchers somewhat easier.

Unfortunately, a major problem arose as soon as I began to prepare a prospectus to present to a prospective publisher. Even the best commercial photographers cannot produce high-quality prints from photocopies already reduced from originals. This is where my search stands today, still unable to assemble a complete, publishable version of the two 1935 NPS reports. Of all the libraries I visited, only the Bancroft Library had preserved an original NPS document—a gift copy.

So, perhaps the time has come in this computer era to reassess the riches buried among the 6,800 items

already listed in the Washington Office bibliography. Considering the wealth of titles, the bibliography represents a vast resource of information for the patient investigator. Too often we look down on the work of predecessors, asking ourselves what they can possibly contribute to a present generation. Nevertheless, valuable information both about research process and site background is contained in the cultural resource bibliography titles. Perhaps some concerned office might be able to trace the "critical path" of NPS reports from their point of origin to the first depository, and thence to their present location. If this treasury of historical documents cannot be unearthed, whatever original material remains might best be shared and preserved through responsible publication. ©

The author is Past-President of the Society of Architectural Historians. Recently he has been researching American material in the principal archives in the United States, England, France and Spain. He would like to acknowledge with thanks the many courtesies and indulgences extended by the NPS librarians during his inquiries. Please contact Professor Pickens at 275 Union Blvd., Apt. 1409, St. Louis, MO 63108 with any information concerning the location of the original typescript or drawings from the 1935-1936 NPS Reports A and B.

Footnotes

1. David Nathanson, Chief, Office of Library and Archival Services, Harpers Ferry Center, *The National Park Service History Collection*.
2. *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Chapel Hill, N.C. 1957, pp. 8-9.
3. Thomas A. DuRant, Picture Librarian, Office of Graphics Research, Harpers Ferry Center, Springfield, Virginia. Mr. DuRant was responsible for identifying the 5,000 combustible nitrate negatives made by George Grant, and for their loan to John Clonts to copy on safety film at NPS-WACC.



Drawing by S. DeLong, 1935. Mission at Tubutama, Sonora, Mexico, painted decoration over classical mouldings below the dome.

Reusing Gas Fixtures

If the gas fixtures originally in a historic property are not available, care should be taken to acquire fixtures suitable both in period and type. Anachronisms should be avoided, as well as fixtures inappropriate to the stylistic character, original use, and former social status of the property.

Current safety standards preclude the use of gas as an illuminant in almost all restorations of historic properties. Therefore, electricity is necessary in reinstalled gas fixtures. Conceal wiring by running it through the fixture instead of applying it to the outer surface. Many gas fixtures were sand-cast in brass, iron, spelter (a zinc alloy), or bronze. The channels through which the gas flowed were therefore often rough-surfaced; so great care must be taken to avoid rupturing the insulation when inserting the wires. Fixtures with brass tubing instead of sand-cast branches do not endanger insulation. Gas keys should always be secured, however, as turning them will cut the wires within.

Modern safety standards require a compromise where electrified gas fixtures join ceilings or walls. Gas pipes usually emerged directly from ceilings without any canopies, or plates to mask the transition. As canopies are now required where fixtures are connected with wiring in ceilings or walls, the smallest and least conspicuous canopies should be chosen.

One of the most common errors encountered in restored gas fixtures is the use of incorrect glass shades, or "globes." All shades made before 1876 at the earliest had bases approximately three inches in span. Shades about six inches across should never be used in restorations representing a date before about 1878. If matching sets of original shades are not available, select good reproductions which are not too thick and opaque to plausibly resemble the nineteenth-century shades.

In restoring original gas fixtures, great care should be taken to preserve original finishes. Matte ormolu and burnished brass, often combined with colors, gave contrasting highlights and accents in a single fixture. If a "restored" fixture is entirely without contrasts, it may well have been overly cleaned, destroying its original finish.

Often the amount of light supplied by electricity in a restored gas fixture is too great. A clear flame bulb of ten watts gives about the same amount of light as an open-flame fishtail or batwing gas burner. A twenty-watt bulb gives about the same amount of light as a Welsbach gas mantle, which was not used until 1890.

If the necessary compromises are kept to a minimum, it is possible to simulate gas lighting both plausibly and safely through the use of correct fixtures discretely electrified. *Gas-lighting in America - A Guide for Historic Preservation* is available



from the U.S. Government Printing Office (Stock Number 024-016-00094-3).

Densy Peter Myers
Historian, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), WASO

Nineteenth-century gaslight.

The Stencil Solution

Stenciling is the application of a substance such as paint, ink, or metallic powder onto a surface through an impervious material into which a pattern has been cut. Easily understood by volunteer workers, it can be executed with a minimum of expert help. A well-designed stencil kit, small artist's brushes, minimal qualities of paint, and a well-planned work site can allow a crew of unskilled volunteers to be guided through the restoration or re-creation of historic ornamental painting. If the stencil or template pattern is complex, it can be analyzed, then reduced to a series of numbered templates applied directly to a wall, frieze, or ceiling, and painted in sequence. Modern materials allow for stencils of great size, while precise registration methods permit the reproduction of even some wall-paper patterns. Stencils can also convincingly mimic woodblock printing and can be used in any circumstance in which silk screen methods would be used.

Traditionally, stencils were cut from a form of heavy manila board, oiled in order to help repel the water-based paints used to in-fill paint the templates. Paper stencils were also used. More delicate or complex patterns were often stencilled using heavy wax paper which was translucent and could thus be more carefully registered. Commercial decorators used hand-cut brass stencils for larger commissions and for the ex-

ecution of complex, multi-layered designs. But brass stencils were also expensive and difficult to make.

The development of translucent plastic films, and their application to stencilling in the 1970s caused a major advance in the craft. Mylar, like waxed paper, is translucent and thus allows for tight registration. Mylar rejects paint and is cleanable like brass, but can be cut with a knife like stencil board. It can be drawn on and used like tracing paper. It tends to lie flat, is difficult to tear, relatively inexpensive, and widely available (in sheets or full rolls), coming in seven different weights. It can be clear, fogged, or gridded.

In-fill painting a damaged wall-paper, or re-creating a Victorian frieze might require expert advice to produce the stencil kits and working tools, but the bulk of the labor can be done by interested volunteers. Many projects, especially in colonial, rustic, or early 20th century architecture are actually very simple. A pattern can be traced in mylar, cut with a matte knife, and pounce-painted with a stencil brush to produce a fine reproduction of an historic pattern.

Larry Boyce
Larry Boyce & Associates, Inc.
San Francisco, California
415/626-2122

(Editor's Note: The author is available to execute or oversee complex stencil projects, restorations, and seminars.)



Men working on stenciled Second Empire room, Archbishop's Mansion Inn, San Francisco.



Frieze band, stenciled re-creation of an original wood block painted wall-paper frieze.



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Book Release

Recent Advances in Leather Conservation, proceedings of the June 1984 FAIC leather refresher course, will be published by The Foundation of The American Institute for Conservation in May, 1985. The paperback book contains not only significant new developments in treatment, but also fundamental concepts and techniques for leather conservators. The transcribed presentations were given by course guides Betty M. Haines, H.A.B. van Soest and Peter B. Hallebeek, as well as guest lecturer Jesse Munn and 16 of the other participants. An extensive leather bibliography by Mary Garbin and product data are included. The editor is Sonja Fogle and the assistant editors are Toby Raphael and Katherine Singley. The cost, plus shipping, is \$10 between May 1 and August 31, and \$15 after August 31, 1985. Please make checks payable in U.S. currency to AIC, and send orders to: AIC, 3545 Williamsburg Lane, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008.

NPS Conference on Fossil Resources

The First Conference on Fossil Resources in the National Park Service will be held in October 1986 at Dinosaur National Monument, Utah. This 40-hour conference will *not* be a meeting of paleontologists, but rather will serve as an interface between the scientific community and managers and interpreters. Topics will include legal protection of fossils, threats to fossils (both human and non-human) and how to mitigate them, addressing fossils in a Natural Resources Management Plan, basic data necessary for the successful management of fossils in the field, how to use outside researchers to develop and implement a management program, fossils as museum objects, interpreting fossils and ancient environments, training seasonals, and technical expertise and facilities available within the Service.

The conference is an outgrowth of concern about this resource service-wide. Interested parties seeking additional information should contact Dan Chure, Park Paleontologist, Dinosaur National Monument, P.O. Box 128, Jensen, Utah 84035, (801) 789-2115.

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